VALLEY VOICE

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Candidate Ralph Kaelble Seeks to Make Changes in D.A.'s Office

STEVE PASTIS

In a political race that already has more than its fair share of drama, Tulare County District Attorney candidate Ralph Kaelble has the endorsement of the Tulare County Sheriff's Department, the Tulare County Corrections Association and police officer associations in Visalia, Exeter, Lindsay and Dinuba.

Ralph Kaelble

"It is a difficult move to back a challenger against a sitting district attorney," Kaelble said. "I went into this knowing full well that there's a good chance that a lot of people that say they're going to back me are not going to back me when it comes down to signing on the dotted line, but they did.

"They want change," he continued. "They want things to be better. They want the law enforcement community to be closer and to work together, and to get the things done that we've always gotten done, and I'm that person. I worked with the D.A.'s office for almost 14 years so they know me. These people that are endorsing me, they know who I am, they know what I'm about."

Kaelble, who was born and raised in the Los Angeles area, graduated cum laude from California State University, Dominguez Hills. He received the Outstanding Student Award, the Abraham Krushkov Scholarship, and was a member of Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society. He attended Loyola Law School in Los Angeles where he served as the student bar association president, was on the dean's list, and received the dean's service award.

After graduating and passing the California Bar Examination, he started his career as a deputy district attorney in Tulare County, working in Visalia, Porterville and Tulare, prosecuting misdemeanors, general felonies, juvenile crimes, welfare fraud, auto theft, auto insurance fraud, child molestation, crimes against peace officers, and homicides, before he was promoted to the position of supervising attorney.

Kaelble's service with the D.A.'s office ended abruptly on January 2, 2013, when he was called to human resources.

"When I got there, I was told that my employment was no longer necessary with the district attorney's office after almost 14 years of stellar experience," he said, adding, "Every review I've gotten has been above average.

"I was not given any reason for it," he added. "I was told, 'Your services are no longer necessary. Here is your letter of termination.'"

The letter Kaelble was given read, "You are hereby notified that your services are no longer needed and are terminated… you are to remove your personal effects from the office, turn

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Virginia Gurrola, Tulare County Supervisor candidate. Photo by Jordon Dean.

Gurrola Vies for Tulare County's Fifth District Seat

TONY MALDONADO

In early December, Virginia Gurrola threw her hat into the ring as a contender for the Fifth District seat on the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

Gurrola, a Porterville city council member, faces off in the June 3 election against two-term incumbent Mike Ennis and recent entry Felipe Martinez, both Porterville residents. If any single candidate does not receive a simple majority of the vote, the top two would face each other in a November runoff.

Gurrola served on the council from 1995-2003, and was re-elected to the city's council in 2012 and served as mayor for roughly three months. She is also a retired employee at Porterville College, having served as its director of Financial Aid/Admissions and Records.

She previously ran for State Assembly, once in 2000 and again in 2002. She originally ran for Porterville's city council, she said, by chance – as the adviser to MEChA, her students wanted to see the political process, and suggested she run, winning the election and later serving as the city's mayor in 2000.

She wants to run for the supervisorial position, she joked, because she's "not getting any younger," and would be satisfied with the position as a final destination.

"If there's a barrier there, you can find your way around it. You will find your way through it with God's help," she said.

She's taking that philosophy forward in the upcoming election; while an election against an incumbent is usually an uphill battle, she says she's ready for the challenge, and that her willingness to work with others and her accessibility set her apart.

"I engage with people. When I'm serving in an elected position, I think about who I need to work with, how to work with them, and how we can make things better," Gurrola said.

An example, the recent controversy involving Porterville's LGBT Pride Month proclamation, she

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Supervisor Vander Poel Looks Back at 2013

PETE VANDER POEL

When I took over as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors in 2013, I wanted to address four broad areas that I believed would help improve life in Tulare County. Those areas included: Health & Wellness, Public Safety, Investing in Youth and Building Communities. Although I cannot say that all challenges were completely addressed over the last year, I do feel that efforts were undertaken that pointed Tulare County in the right direction.

Supervisor Pete Vander Poel

Regarding Health and Wellness; I think Tulare County Government made great strides amongst our own workforce and also in the general public. The first ever Healthy Tulare County Week was held, with each day of the week being dedicated to improving health and well-being in the county through a specific subject area. Additionally, through the dedication and hard work of the Human Resources Department and Rhonda Sjostrom, Tulare County also adopted our first ever comprehensive Health and Wellness Program, which will certainly result in positive health improvements for Tulare County Employees. Tulare County also assisted in bringing awareness to many critical health issues that challenge our community; Mental Health Awareness, Suicide Prevention, and Drug and Alcohol Awareness through Red Ribbon Week, just to name a few.

2013 was also a strong year for

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College of the Sequoias Awaits Accreditation Ruling with Optimism

STAN CARRIZOSA

About 11 months ago, on February 11, 2013, College of the Sequoias was notified that it was being placed on "show cause," the highest sanction from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, for being significantly noncompliant in key areas required for full accreditation.

The ACCJC never questioned the quality of education, the rigor of courses or the successful outcomes including positive transfer rates, strong vocational programs, an outstanding police academy and nationally recognized nursing program. We were required to clean up internal systems/processes such as governance and decision-making, planning and resource allocation.

Since receipt of the "show cause" letter, the entire college community – Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff and students – have responded to this call to action with positive intent and focus. The past 11 months have been an intense period of self-evaluation of all policies, procedures, protocols and practices.

In an effort to build new leadership

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- Wishing You a Safe Holiday Season -

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The Rainy Season is Coming

For roughly half a dozen years now, two competing thoughts, opposite sides of the same coin, have been turning in my mind. But unlike the 50/50 of a coin toss, where the result is demonstrably one thing or another, my long-running rumination is more akin the old question, "Which do you want first--the good news or the bad news?"

We might as well begin with the bad news, if only to get it behind us. I've been thinking that climate change, over the several hundred years of unfolding it'll take to finally manifest itself, will eliminate fully half of humanity. That's about as bad as it gets, right? So let's drink to the good news: I suspect it'll be the making of us. It's an expensive proposition--in terms of our species--I know; such a cheery outcome is far from assured, and we're mired in the beginning of all this...change. Because we can no longer even call it global warming--too many still doubt what they say is the "science" of it; others, mocking the very idea, cite the recent so-called "polar vortex" as proof-positive that global warming is a sham.

This is not the beginning of the end. It is the start of the beginning--and the end of the beginning, in keeping with Winston Churchill, will have occurred when we have all agreed on a name for the current phenomena. Global warming may be accurate for the entire biosphere, but on a local level--where people live and experience it--the gradual heating of the planet results in climate change.

Take a look outside and see for yourself.

When I was a kid, it used to rain. We even had what we used to call a rainy season. From mid-October to early May one could fairly expect consistent rainfall. Of course, there were droughts. There were also deluges. But the mainstay was consistency: the rain would come, as it always had, whether copiously or not, between October and May. Notice how we're not talking about the cold here, in the midst of winter? Now, I hate the cold--but that's just me. Winter is cold and global warming won't rectify that, but our rainfall totals should illustrate that there is more to global warming than merely temperature. The normal climates of places all around the world will change. Where we are used to moisture (remember foggy winters?) dry spells may prevail, and the reverse, of course, may also be true. "Unseasonable" weather, in terms of precipitation, temperature and storms, quite possibly could become the new normal.

What will happen if we couple several hundred years of this with an ever-increasing population? Forget about the gradually rising seas. Forget about the increasing frequency and dramatic new intensity of storms. How will climate change affect something so quotidian as, say, vectors of disease? I mean, can we expect to see something like malaria re-emerge in southern England?

I have no idea. I also am baffled by those who deny climate change. Why is it a political issue? One look at the air in this part of the Valley should tell you that environmental issues ought to be no more controversial than changing one's bath water. So why throw the baby out? But I do know that adapting to change will be expensive--and where money is concerned so too, always, are politics. And of course there are those who cannot accept human culpability in this scenario. Must that be politicized, too?

Enough. Whenever I find myself in this despond I try to picture the future. If, after the fugue of the coming centuries, humanity is pared by half--well, at least over-population will have been solved. Resources will be in abundance while pollution will be abated. We'll still have our technology, always new and improved. Just think how that will evolve over several hundred years. And the many advances to come in medicine--there may be drastically fewer humans in the future, but we likely will live longer, and healthier, lives.

Which may mean the cycle of over-population could repeat itself. But I'd like to think that we might learn to treat our environment differently. I'd like to think that new technologies will be cleaner than these of the present epoch, at the beginning of climate change.

So there's always hope. A few months ago, I had a rear window in one of our cars fixed. Its lifting mechanism had failed, with the result that the glass was neither up or down, but open halfway. This happened in late September, a comfortable time here in the Valley, and my wife was loathe to have it repaired. This made sense, for a couple of weeks. Then I had the work done. When she asked why I went ahead with it, I said, "The rainy season is coming."

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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POLITICAL FIX

CATHERINE DOE

RACE GETS CROWDED FOR THE 26TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT RACE

Derek Thomas and Carlton Jones, both Democrats who hail from Tulare, announced their candidacy for the 26th State Assembly District earlier this month. They are friends, personally and politically, as both have run for Tulare City Council several times. Mr. Thomas barely lost both times as he was the next closest candidate. This is no small feat because their first race had 13 contenders. Mr. Jones is the current Vice mayor of Tulare.

Mr. Thomas grew up in Newark, NJ, and served in the Army after graduating from high school. He moved to California in 1984 and settled in Tulare two years later with his wife and two children. He has a passion for politics, saying that, "Whatever I can do to help the quality of life for people in Tulare County, I will do it."

Mr. Thomas' major platform position is supporting Tulare County's agriculture. "I always support our farmers and dairymen because I know the importance of agriculture and what it means to Tulare County being one of the largest agricultural producers in the country." He also wants to be supportive of the largest agricultural exposition in the country, knowing that it brings in millions of dollars a year to the community. Another one of his priorities is to "fight to protect our water because without it there would be no agricultural industry."

According to the *Tulare Voice*, the 48-year-old Thomas said he plans to retire from the Department of Corrections in 2015, "So the timing is right for me."

Vice Mayor Jones is a City of Fresno firefighter specialist. He served on the city council from 2004 to 2008, lost his seat in 2008, and was elected again in 2012. He is married with eight children.

According to the Visalia Times-Delta, "I am not a cookie-cutter," he said. "I supported Connie [Conway] and Devin [Nunes, the U.S. Representative]. I also support President Barack Obama. I am willing to work with Republicans and represent the working class," he said.

According to the *Tulare Voice*, Jones said the only set item on his agenda is "to change the way we govern. Government isn't working for people anymore, especially the working class people, and I want to be part of the change. If everyone's happy with the way we've been operating in the last eight to ten years, then I'm not the guy for you. I'm all about just being a working class representative," Jones said. "A lot of people are making decisions for a lifestyle they've never been a part of."

Mr. Thomas is not your garden variety Democrat, either. According to a *Visalia Times-Delta* blogger, he is anti-abortion and against same-sex marriage.

Mr. Thomas and Mr. Jones are the fourth and fifth candidates for the 26th state assembly seat. Democrat Ruben Macareno, and Republicans Ester Barajas and Rudy Mendoza have also announced. An independent, Franklin Jones, has filed a 501 with the California Secretary of State but has not officially announced. The 26th State Assembly District seat is currently held by Connie Conway, who is not seeking reelection.

DEAN FLOREZ DISAPPOINTS BY PULLING OUT OF RACE

According to the *Fresno Bee*, "former state Senator Dean Florez has closed his 2014 campaign committee for state controller after paying off a $60,000 fine for misusing campaign funds, the largest such penalty in state history."

So what are the duties of the state controller? According to the California State Controller's website, "The controller is the chief fiscal officer of California, the ninth-largest economy in the world. Elected every four years, the controller makes sure the state's $100 billion budget is spent properly."

To have Mr. Florez pull out of the race is a blow when you write a column like this. Now we are going to miss out on some of the best spin ever listening to him justify spending campaign money at places like Ikea and Bed Bath and Beyond.

Could Mr. Florez have picked a better office to run for? Granted, he would have made a lousy state controller. But he also would have been a dream candidate. Now we have to wait for whatever fringe candidate plans on running against Rep. Devin Nunes to get some chuckles. Maybe this time it can be someone who actually lives in the district.

There does exist a serious contender for state controller. He is Assembly Speaker John Perez. He put forward a new ballot measure to help California stockpile cash to survive future recessions. This measure would mitigate the need for deep spending cuts during bad times. He sounds like someone who could run the ninth-largest economy in the world--but does he shop at Ikea?

SETTING IT STRAIGHT – AGAIN

The *Visalia Times-Delta* on December 31st wrote that there was going to be a "dramatic election year expected for local politicians." One of the more dramatic battles was going to be Republican incumbent Sen. Andy Vidak against Republican incumbent Sen. Jean Fuller for the 16th district. Even the *Valley Voice*'s department of political analysis, employees --one ; me, lounging around on my couch in my bunny slippers--knew that Sen. Fuller and Sen. Vidak were never going to face each other in a state senate race.

Sen. Fuller's spokesperson, Julie Sauls, confirmed that Sen. Vidak and Sen. Fuller were not running for the same office. Sen. Fuller is currently in the 18th district and will be running for the 16th district in June of 2014, though she has not formally announced. Sen. Vidak currently holds the 16th district seat but will be running for the 14th district. Seeing as one lives in Hanford and the other lives in Bakersfield, it's only prudent to check before assuming that they will be challenging each other.

The *Visalia Times-Delta* got its information off of the California Secretary of State website. Candidates who want to start fundraising need to file a Statement of Intent with the secretary of state, but this does not mean that they will actually run. Nor does it mean that the information they submit is correct. John Ellis, from the Fresno Bee, said, "lots of politicians open up campaign accounts only to not run for that seat — or not run at all. Some just use it as a spot to park their campaign money while they consider their next political move."

According to the California Secretary of State's Office, "We have people file a 501 Statement of Intent who can't even complete the form or just want to see their name on a website. If someone files a 501 stating that they intend to run for lieutenant governor, then that's what gets put on the site. We don't check anything. That's what the Election Divisions do."

The California Secretary of State website is just too much fun and the Visalia Times-Delta got sucked into its database. Where else can you find out that Cindy Sheehan from the Peace and Freedom party might be running for governor? Remember her? Or that Kumar Rakesh Christiam from the "Unknown Party" wants to be governor. Why is his party designation "Unknown?" because Kumar didn't understand how to fill out the "party preference" section of the form.

Sen. Vidak's real competitors are Democrats Luis Chavez, a Fresno Unified School District trustee, and Kings County Supervisor Richard Valle.

ABEL MALDONADO - THE PERFECT REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR

Governor Jerry Brown will most likely win reelection in 2014, so it doesn't matter who runs on the Republican ticket, right? Wrong. Tim Donnally shooting off his mouth that he is unfazed by a state electorate that leans far to his left could seriously endanger the future of the Republican Party in California. While most candidates in vulnerable districts are running towards Immigration Reform, Mr. Donnally continues to be a vocal critic. This will drive up Hispanic turnout and affect the chances of Sen. Andy Vidak and Rep. David Valadao keeping their seats, or even keeping them in Republican hands.

According to the Fresno Bee, a Republican analyst said, "the main concern for all Valley Republicans should be if the GOP's gubernatorial candidate will be neutral or will do them harm."

What was Mr. Donnally's main criticism of the last Republican candidate for governor, Meg Whitman? "She wasn't listening."

CHRIS CHRISTIE'S FATE WAS ALREADY WRITTEN

Did the Fort Lee scandal ruin New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's chances to be the Republican Presidential nominee for 2016? No, because he didn't have a prayer of being a Republican presidential candidate in the first place. I don't know if there are more video clips of the governor being rude to his constituents or skeletons in his closet. In what universe can this crass man woo the Republican base of Southerners, evangelicals and Tea Partiers? Is this someone Republicans honestly think will still be standing after the South Carolina primary?

When Mitt Romney, who himself was passed over for the likes of Sarah Palin, turns around and doesn't even put Gov. Christie on his short list of running mates, you know something is seriously amiss. The only thing this scandal did to the 2016 presidential campaign was deprive us pundits of a few, well maybe a lot, of juicy stories as Gov. Christie's skeletons emerged to see the light of day.

Gov. Christie may be a very good governor of New Jersey, but New Jersey is where he should stay. Political retribution is not acceptable on the national landscape, especially if one gets caught. What personality type partially closes down the busiest bridge on earth because someone hurt his feelings? Is this who we want in charge of the largest nuclear arsenal in the world?

Gov. Christie declared during his two-hour news conference, "I am not a bully," reminding us of a certain someone who declared "I am not a crook." Christine O'Donnell declared, "I am not a witch," yet would have done so much better in her election had she been one.

What has been the Republican response in defense of Gov. Chris Christie? Radio silence.

IS IT TOO EARLY TO TALK ABOUT THE 2016 ELECTION? HOW ABOUT 2018?

How do you know that pretty-boy Gavin Newsom is terming out after he is re-elected for the office of lieutenant governor in 2014? Because, out of the eight people who have filed their Statement of Intent for the 2018 election, three are running for lieutenant governor. As I've said ad nauseum, this doesn't mean they are actually going to run, but these aren't names like Democrat Kwame Boateng, who fantasizes about running for governor. These are three fairly well-known politicians who would make strong candidates: State Senators Tom Berryhill, Darrell Steinberg and Mark Leno.

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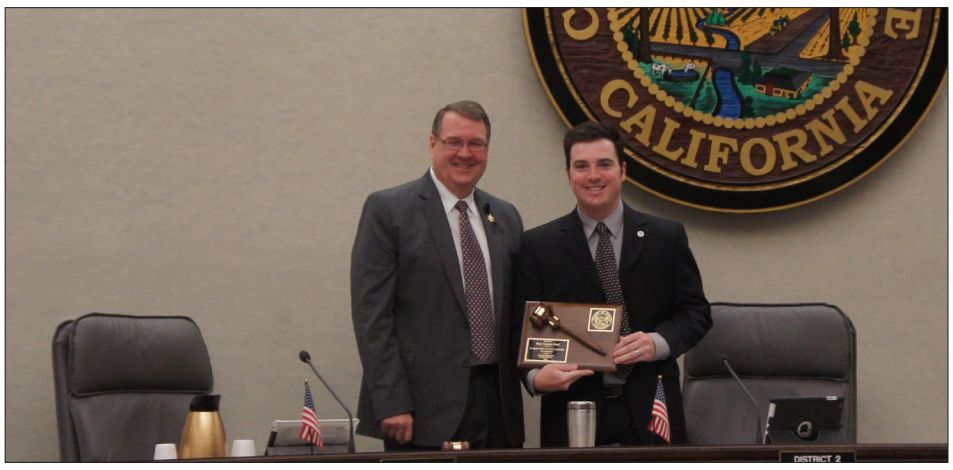

Outgoing Board Chairman Pete Vander Poel (right) passes gavel to new Chairman Phil Cox.

Supervisor Phil Cox to Serve as Chairman of the Tulare Board of Supervisors

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors elected a new chairman at its January 7th meeting, selecting District Three Supervisor Phil Cox to its top position. The chairman is charged with setting and running weekly meetings and attending functions on behalf of the board, among other additional duties.

Five years ago, Cox held that same position, steering the county through some of its most difficult financial times. He is looking forward to improving the lives of the county's employees – instead of having to make cuts, as was the case when he was chairman in 2008.

Cox replaces District Two Supervisor Pete Vander Poel, who served as chairman in 2013. District Four Supervisor Steve Worthley was selected to serve as vice chairman. Each member of the board of supervisors performs the duties as chairman through a rotation process.

"Pete took the bull by the horns last year and did a fantastic job," Cox said. "His leadership was appreciated."

During the meeting, Vander Poel passed a new gavel to Cox, and later delivered a wrap-up speech for 2013. He highlighted programs and projects the county initiated last year, such as a wellness program for employees, drafting tougher marijuana policies for the unincorporated areas, increasing accessibility through holding night meetings for the public, and developing a nuisance property abatement program.

"Although I cannot say that all challenges were completely addressed over the last year, I do feel that efforts were undertaken that pointed Tulare County in the right direction," Vander Poel said. "I think that 2013 was a great year for Tulare County and its residents. I want to thank my colleagues, county administration, and all county departments and employees for their tireless and outstanding work to improve life in our county." Chairman Cox announced he will deliver the annual State of the County address at the Board of Supervisors 9 a.m. meeting on January 28.

Visalia Among Largest Gainers in Best-Performing Cities Ranking

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce congratulates our local community and business leaders for their recent success in improving our local economy, job market, and overall economic vitality. Proof that our combined efforts are paying off came last week with the announcement that the Visalia-Porterville metropolitan area had jumped 69 spots on a national ranking of high-performing cities. Visalia-Porterville's improvement ranked eighth overall and second among all California markets.

The Best-Performing Cities Index is published annually by the Milken Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan economic think tank that works to improve lives by advancing innovative economic and policy solutions that create jobs, widen access to capital, and enhance health. The index objectively measures which U.S. metropolitan areas are promoting economic vitality based on job creation and retention, the quality of new jobs, and their participation in the knowledge economy. The goal, according to the report issued by the Milken Institute is to "help businesses, investors, industry associations, development agencies and government officials... monitor and evaluate the performance of metros where they work and do business relative to the rest of the country. The index also provides benchmarking data that can inform approaches to improving a region's performance. In addition, the index provides a tool for understanding consumer market sand business opportunities as communities attempt to fully recover from the financial crisis and Great Recession."

Visalia-Porterville, which ranked 99th overall in 2013 (up from 168th in 2012), trailed only San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles (25th overall, up 81 spots) and Bakersfield-Delano (19th overall, unchanged) in the Central Valley. Visalia-Porterville placed well ahead of other Central Valley neighbors, including Fresno (158, down 13), Merced (159, down 40), Stockton (185, up 4) and Modesto (188, up 11).

"The City of Visalia is very pleased to see a thriving local economy emerge after several years of economic recession," said Visalia Mayor Steve Nelsen. "Investments in infrastructure, such as the Plaza Drive Interchange improvements and street widening, have helped attract new businesses to the Industrial Park and existing businesses to expand. Retailers on Mooney Boulevard, in downtown, on North Dinuba Boulevard, and in other locations are enjoying increased sales. These efforts have created needed jobs for Visalians and nearby residents and stimulated regional economic growth."

"The chamber is encouraged by the recent growth in employment and wages documented by this report," said Visalia Chamber President/CEO Glenn Morris, "but we recognize this is just one step in the right direction. We remain committed to working with our public and private sector partners to build on this momentum and continue building a community where businesses can thrive and investors want to invest."

Full details of the 2013 Best-Performing Cities Index can be viewed at www.best-cities.org.

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Rendering of Visalia's fifth middle school.

Measure E-Funded Visalia Middle School Plans Unveiled

STAFF REPORTS

Renderings and plans for Visalia's much-needed fifth middle school have been presented to the Visalia Unified School District Board of Trustees, and a question-and-answer session on the new school is scheduled for the community.

The middle school, with a cost of about $35 million, is a key component of Measure E, the $60 million school bond passed by Visalia Unified School District voters in 2006. A statewide school bond, expected to be on the November 2014 ballot, will provide a matching grant if passed by voters.

The school would be located near Akers Road and Riggin Avenue to accommodate growth in the northwest quadrant of Visalia. The 160-acre parcel, owned by VUSD, is designed to also house Visalia's future fifth high school.

Scheduled to open in August 2016, the school is being designed to accommodate over 900 students, and will include a two-story classroom/administration building.

It will be planned for future solar structures and feature contemporary science labs, a tech lab, and a separate gymnasium and multipurpose room. Plans also include a large cooking kitchen that will serve up to three elementary schools.

Woodlake-based Oral E. Micham, Inc., has been chosen as the general contractor.

A question-and-answer session for parents, teachers and community members will be held from 5-7 p.m. on Thursday, January 16, at the VUSD Board Room, 5000 W. Cypress, Visalia.

For more information, call Robert Groeber, 730-7529, or Craig Wheaton, 730-7522. For information on Measure E, visit VUSDEprogress.org.

New Visalia Deputy City Manager, Finance Director Appointed

STAFF REPORTS

The Visalia City Council confirmed the appointment by City Manager Mike Olmos of Eric Frost as deputy city manager and Renee Nagel as finance director. Council members reviewed the recommendation during closed session at their January 6 meeting.

"The reorganization is an effort to create an organizational structure that increases efficiencies and capitalizes on staff strengths," said Olmos. "The city is fortunate to have the knowledge and expertise Mr. Frost and Ms. Nagel bring to their positions."

Frost, formerly the administrative services director for the city, will now oversee airport, transit, risk management and special projects. Nagel, formerly assistant finance director, will now oversee finance and purchasing.

Eric Frost

Assistant City Manager Leslie Caviglia will continue to oversee the city clerk, community relations, Visalia Convention Center and natural resource conservation. In addition, she will now oversee human resources and information technology.

Frost has been the administrative services director for the city since August 2003. He was responsible for the business activities of the city, including finance, debt administration, treasury, accounting, risk management, human resources, negotiations and information systems. He was the administrative services director for the City of Watsonville from 1991 to 2003. He had previously worked for the City of Visalia as a financial analyst from 1984 to 1986, and as assistant finance director from 1986 to 1991. He has a bachelor of arts in economics and masters of public administration from Brigham Young University.

Nagel worked as an intern for the city in 1998 in finance and was hired as an administrative technician in community development in 1999. She was promoted to financial analyst in 2000, finance manager in 2007 and assistant finance director in January 2011. She was interim Public Works Director from January to August 2012. She received a bachelor of arts in business administration with an emphasis in finance in 1999 from Fresno State University.

Renee Nagel

Frost's appointment is a lateral appointment and his annual salary will remain at $148,321 plus benefits. Nagel's annual salary will be $121,327 plus benefits. Since September, the appointments of Olmos, Caviglia, Frost and Nagel has resulted in an overall annual salary savings of over $62,000 to the City of Visalia, compared to previous appointments in these positions.

Kaelble

Continued from p. 1

in your keys, your district attorney office identification card, your courthouse security ID and any other items or materials belonging to the county."

Kaelble said he was given the option of resigning, keeping the mention of a termination off his resume. He took the resignation option so, technically, he did resign. He signed the resignation form letter he was given.

"You can call it what you want," said Kaelble, who opened a law office in downtown Visalia in February. "They're going to call it what they want. Yes, I was terminated by the district attorney's office.

"What I can tell you is that maybe it was personal," he continued, attempting to explain the reasons newly appointed (at the time) District Attorney Tim Ward decided to issue the termination letter. "Maybe he doesn't like me, I don't know. More than anything, it was probably because he was threatened by me. I am well-liked by law enforcement and I think that maybe in his mind he didn't like the competition."

Assistant District Attorney Shani Jenkins, Kaelble's supervisor, was terminated at the same time.

Last month, Kaelble's wife, Afreen, a 15-year veteran of the D.A.'s office, was given a similar letter. She also signed the form resignation letter, and has since obtained legal counsel.

"The challenge here with any personnel ruling is that I can't discuss specifics," said Ward (who will be interviewed in the Valley Voice in February) about Kaelble's termination/resignation. "If memory serves me correctly, Ralph resigned.

"As district attorney, I have not nor will I make personnel decisions of this magnitude without consulting with the county counsel," he added, before discussing the responsibilities he has as a county department head.

"One of the challenges is to maintain staff that not only do the other managers and leaders have confidence in, but that the office staff has confidence in and the county as well," said Ward. "I have great confidence in the team we've assembled. We're looking forward, not back."

Regarding Afreen Kaelble's termination/resignation, Ward said, "I know for a fact that Ms. Kaelble signed and turned in a resignation letter. I think it's fair to say she resigned."

"It's not like she resigned because she was looking for greener pastures," said Kaelble, who maintains that, "It's not accurate the way that they're saying it.

"This was a strategic move by my opponent," said Kaelble. "He felt like he was going to try to hurt me as much as possible.

"This is not about my family," he continued. "If it wasn't my wife, it would be someone else. The fact of the matter is that you should not be in a position of power when you can do something like this to people just because of where their politics lie."

Following his wife's termination/resignation from the D.A.'s office, Kaelble issued a press release with the headline "Louisiana Style Politics Has No Place in the Central Valley."

The press release quotes former Tulare County Assistant District Attorney Don Gallian: "I always found Afreen Kaelble to be an excellent prosecutor who was concerned for the victims of crime. I was very concerned to hear that she had been forced out of the district attorney's office because she was married to a political opponent of the appointed district attorney. The people of Tulare County are never served when politics is put ahead of public safety as the primary concern of the appointed district attorney."

Kaelble – who is quoted in the release as saying, "For someone who has been given the responsibility to protect our families from crime, this action only shows that playing politics trumps what is really important," – was asked if the release was setting a negative tone for the campaign.

"Personally, I don't think I set the tone," he responded. "I think that my opponent set the tone by doing something like this at a time like this. I think what he did was negative. I think they way he did it was wrong, and if he does things that are wrong and negative, I think it's my duty to call him on it. Frankly, if I wasn't in the race against him, I would call him on it because I think that's what we should do as citizens.

"I don't think it sets a negative tone," he repeated. "I think is shows people that in Tulare County today, the district attorney will try to crush you if you disagree with him."

While with the district attorney's office, Kaelble supervised the Porterville office for approximately three years.

"When I supervised there, I had a really good reputation, and one of the reasons is because I believe in an open office, I believe in communication between the agencies," he said. "If they had a question, they would call me. They would call me about issues having to do with the team I supervised, but also they would call me when they couldn't get a hold of someone else. If I couldn't answer a question, I would get them the right answer."

Kaelble said improving communication was one of the things he "would do differently" if he were elected Tulare County District Attorney.

"First of all, I would foster communication more than there's ever been in all the years I've been with the district attorney's office," he said. "For instance, if you were a law enforcement officer and you submitted a case and we rejected it, and you were upset about it, then I would want you to come in and talk to me about it and maybe we could work it out. Either we can work it out or I would explain to you why we can't work it out, but I have that open-door policy."

Kaelble would also give access to his staff's cell phone numbers to law enforcement and others.

"The D.A.'s office guarded those numbers for years," he said. "It said right on the bottom of our phone list, 'For internal use only. Don't give this out. Don't let anyone have this,' like this was a big secret, but this is county government and we should be able to give our numbers out to people and have those people use those numbers. We're public servants so we should be there for the public."

Kaelble is also concerned that a lot of people don't know what the district attorney's office does.

"I want to go visit every part of the county," said Kaelble, "not only visit them but be accessible to those parts of the county. (City Council Member) Amy Shuklian here in Visalia has office hours and she'll announce it a couple weeks in advance that she will be wherever – Tazzaria, Starbucks – for two hours on this day or this night. I want to do that as district attorney of Tulare County. I want to do that because I want people to know what we do. I want people to voice their concerns to me because we need to be in tune with what the community wants."

He would also provide 40-80 hours of training for new employees.

"You get hired and spend a day watching someone else and they say. 'Here are your files. Go for it,'" he said about the current system. "The problem is we don't have any real training. You end up with frustrated D.A.'s who don't know what they're doing," he said. "But more importantly, they're not really doing justice to our community because they just don't know.

"Criminal law is pretty complicated," he said. "You need to know how to prove a case. You need to know about sentencing."

But isn't this taught in law school?

"Not really," Kaelble replied. "Right now, law school training is a little bit of everything, but when you get out of law school, you are not trained to be a prosecutor. You are not trained to be a defense attorney. You are not trained to be a divorce lawyer. You learn all that when you get out. The law degree is the law degree. That gets you the open door to get you to all those other things."

Kaelble would like to see senior or supervising attorneys in the district attorney's office training new employees, who would be hired three or four at a time. He also believes in ridealongs, having his staff accompany local police and sheriff's officers during their investigations.

"I think we should be involved in the training of new officers too," said Kaelble. "Law enforcement gets no more than one day in training in the academy on how to testify – actually on the stand, being cross-examined. You can have an officer who is a stellar police officer – he knows what he is doing, he collects the right evidence, he's doing everything right – but when it comes to courtroom time, he's not well prepared. He doesn't know how to testify. He gets really nervous."

Kaelble anticipates a lot of hard work and meeting a lot of people during this campaign.

"I'm not looking to make it a negative campaign," he said. "This is a campaign where I believe I'm the better candidate and I want to get people to see that, and that's about all I'm trying to do."

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County Seeking Prospective Foster Parents

STAFF REPORTS

Tulare County Foster Care Licensing staff members are now offering personal orientations for prospective foster parents, in addition to the regularly scheduled meetings.

Group orientation sessions are held at 6:30pm on the first and third Thursday of each month at 26500 S. Mooney Blvd. The individual orientation meetings are new and were developed in order to be more accessible to prospective foster parents, explained Anita Ortiz of Tulare County Foster Care Licensing.

"We have such a need for foster parents that we decided to have staff available throughout our normal office hours in order to be more accommodating and, hopefully, encourage more people to go through the orientation and training," Ortiz explained.

Foster care is a program that provides shelter to children who have been removed from their homes because of abuse, neglect or abandonment, or because their parents are ill or incarcerated. The shelter may be emergency, short-term care or longer term. There are nearly 1,000 children in the county's foster care program, and there are not enough foster care homes. Of particular need are foster parents prepared to take in siblings or teenagers, and parents willing to respond to emergency placement needs.

People who are interested in becoming foster parents will need to attend an orientation meeting, and meet requirements such as being at least 18 years old, being financially able to support their own family, having no criminal record and a clear health screening and being certified in CPR and first aid.

"Whenever possible it's best to keep children in familiar schools and communities during tough times," Ortiz said. "When we have people in all areas of the county who are willing and qualified to be foster parents, it is better for the children."

To schedule a personal orientation, or for other information, call 623-0581.

Boys & Girls Club, Tulare County Library to Honor Martin Luther King, Jr.

STAFF REPORTS

The Boys & Girls Club in Visalia is sponsoring the 13th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day March at 10am on Monday, January 20, at the Boys & Girls Club, 215 W. Tulare Ave. in Visalia.

At 10:30am, participants will begin a walk from the Boys & Girls Club, north on Watson and West Streets to Main Street where the group will turn east to Garden Street. The Garden Street Plaza is where the group will gather for an 11am program, featuring a message by Dr. Ronald Smith, EDD, a Boys & Girls Club Community Advisory Board member. The program will also include a performance by the Boys & Girls Club Readers Theater Group reciting portions of King's speeches.

The theme for this year's MLK Day is "The Stand." As King stood up and spoke out for the rights of people who were being "bullied" in society in the 1960s, members of Boys & Girls Clubs are encouraged to speak up when they see young people being bullied in 2014.

Members of the Visalia Gindick Boys & Girls Club have been learning the lessons taught by King. They have been learning about his teachings through speeches and sermons, creating artwork, preparing a skit and designing posters depicting those teachings.

The civil rights leader will be honored all month long by children and adults at the Tulare County Library branches. Participants can make handprints on which to write "kind words," and the hand shapes will be joined in a banner in King's memory. The banners will decorate the branches and the branch with the longest banner will receive a prize to share with their "kind" patrons.

For more information on days and times of the crafts at each individual branch, visit http://tularecountylibrary.org, and choose the locations tab.

Visalia Community Arts Grant Recipients Announced

STAFF REPORTS

The Arts Consortium and the City of Visalia have announced the recipients of the 2014 Community Arts Grant, a city program facilitated by the Arts Consortium, which aims to support local projects in bringing invaluable cultural and artistic assets and events to the community.

The Community Arts Grant Program focuses on developing local cultural resources and supporting programs which reach diverse segments of the community. Two grant types are Seed Grants for new projects, and Community Support Grants for continuing support. Grant requests can range from $250 to $1,500 per year.

This year's Seed Grant recipients include Eames Demetrios' "Kcymaerxthaere" art installation, Arts Visalia's "Containers of Our Culture" Exhibition Catalog, Visalia Rescue Mission's Oval Park revitalization project, ImagineU's creative writing camps, First Fridays, the Visalia Fox Theatre's upcoming Independent Film Series, and the Boys and Girls Club of the Sequoias' "Imagineers" program.

Continuing support grants were awarded to Sound N Vision Foundation's "Youth Music & Art Exploration" workshops; Arts Visalia's "Young at Art 2014" and "North American Print & Drawing Exhibition"; Visalia Opera Company's third annual event; "Baskets and Gourds: Containers of Our Culture V" Conference; and this year's Chinese New Year Celebration.

For more information about these events, or to learn how to apply for next year's grant program, contact the Arts Consortium at artsconsortium1@gmail.com or 802-3266.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Superintendent Woody Smeck presents award to Jerry Torres (right).

Sequoia and Kings Canyon Employee Receives Regional Award

STAFF REPORTS

Jerry Torres, roads/auto/trails facility manager at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, received a regional citation for superior service at the parks' recent all-employees meeting in Three Rivers. The award, which was signed by National Park Service Pacific West Regional Director Christine Lenhertz, was in recognition of his outstanding performance in the completion of a rehabilitation project on the main road (Generals Highway) that runs through Sequoia National Park and the protection of natural and cultural resources.

Torres led the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Federal Highway Administration and Denver Service Center team to complete the planning, design and compliance for this project in a way that would preserve the integrity of the National Register-eligible highway, while protecting the natural resources within the project corridor. The highway work entailed widening existing travel lanes to a consistent 10-foot width and improving the turning radius of the switchbacks for a 22-foot vehicle.

While this work may not seem complicated, the grade, curvature and steepness of the Generals Highway, along with the parks' desire to maintain visitor access, made it especially challenging. Complex work included stabilizing the road shoulders, replicating historic retaining walls, rock slope blasting, and constructing cantilevered bridges. This project also included rehabilitation an 8.5-mile section of the highway and constructing a bridge over Halstead Meadow, a critical park resource, to restore the meadow's natural water flow.

The citation stated, "The successful completion of the project in 2013 would not have been possible without Torres' commitment to the job and the National Park Service."

Tulare County's Indian Gaming Committee Seeks Members

STAFF REPORTS

Tulare County's Indian Gaming Local Community Benefit Committee (TCLCBC) is seeking interested residents to fill three vacancies.

The purpose of the committee is to facilitate the distribution of grant funds made from the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund. Last year, more than $263,000 was appropriated to the seven-member committee for distribution to eligible entities. Funding allocated for the TCLCBC to administer is mandated by Senate Bill 621 (2003), which makes grant funding available to counties, cities and special districts impacted by tribal gaming from the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund.

The committee is composed of seven members, consisting of the following:

- Two county representatives appointed by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.
- Three representatives appointed by mutual agreement of the board of supervisors and the Tule River Indian Tribe.
- Two representatives appointed by the Tule River Indian Tribe.

In addition to the seven members, there are also three alternate positions. The committee meets at least twice per year. Committee members do not receive stipends or mileage reimbursement.

Currently, the TCLCBC is seeking two mutually selected representatives and one mutually selected-alternate representative. You must be at least 18 years old and a Tulare County resident to apply for the committee.

Applications for the TCLCBC can be obtained from the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors located at the County Administration Building, 2800 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia, or you can call 636-5000 and request an application be mailed to you.

Completed applications should be mailed back to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

For more information on the committee, visit: http://tularecounty.ca.gov/cao/index.cfm/indian-gaming/

Chamber Announces Russia Rail Trip

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce announced a new additional to the current lineup of tours in 2014. Information for this trip can be obtained at the Chamber office 220 N. Santa Fe St.

The Russian Cities by Rail trip includes three nights in Moscow and three nights in St. Petersburg. The cost of the tour is $3099 per person and includes roundtrip airfare from LAX as well as nine meals. Travelers will arrive in Moscow where they will have a welcome dinner and meet the other travelers. The first day of the tour will include a full day in Moscow including: Red Square, the Kremlin and a visit to the local Vodka Museum. The next day travelers will have the option to tour the famous Moscow Metro and Tretyakov Gallery or explore Moscow on their own. On day five of the trip, travelers will have the opportunity to tour the Cold War Museum before boarding the high speed SAPSAN train to St. Petersburg. In St. Petersburg, travelers will explore the city canals and visit sights including: Nevsky Prospect, St. Isaac's Cathedral and end the day at the Hermitage. On the last day in St. Petersburg, travelers will have leisure time to explore the city and have the option to tour Peterhof Palace.

This tour is presented by our travel partners Chamber Explorations (CST #2048841-40). For more information on the chamber travel program, contact Nicola Wissler at (559) 734-5876, or visit www.visaliachamber.org and click on the travel link for details itineraries and pricing information.

The mission of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce is to preserve, model and advance business vitality and prosperity for our members and the community.

Rawhide Announce 2014 Staff Hires

After a highly successful 2013 season, the Visalia Rawhide is expanding itsstaff for 2014, as five new hires joined the ballclub this week.

Jill Webb, a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee will be the team's new executive assistant, with James Templeton of McMinnville, Oregon, joining as operations & groundskeeping assistant. Lori Samiani comes by way of Endicott, New York, to become operations assistant and food and beverage coordinator.

Two native Visalians will round out the 2014 Rawhide front office, as Jon Bueno becomes community relations coordinator, and Heather Dominguez joins as office assistant. Both recently graduated from college; Bueno finished his studies at Azusa Pacific University, while Dominguez completed her degree at Cal State Northridge.

The Rawhide front office now has 13 members. With six female front office staffers, the Rawhide has the highest percentage of female staffers in the California League. The staff is also the youngest in the league.

With new energy added to an experienced core of returning staff members, Tulare County's sole professional sports team is poised for an exciting 2014 season.

Top 10 Resolutions for 2014

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

2014 is here and your Better Business Bureau, serving Central California and Inland Empire Counties, has 10 resolutions that can help you fight scammers, prevent identity theft and save some money.

Consumers can save themselves time, trouble and money by creating a budget, researching businesses before they buy and learning to recognize the red flags of common scams. Your BBB offers verified information on businesses and charities, and they're available 24/7 at cencal.bbb.org.

The following resolutions can help consumers have a safe, scam-free 2014:

1. Always check out a business with the BBB prior to making a purchase. Look for the BBB Seal of Accreditation. Accredited Businesses agree to maintain BBB standards of trust. Check out a business at cencal.bbb.org. Also, use our free "Request a Quote" service.

2. Be skeptical of "job offers" that promise easy money. With high unemployment and long job searches, scammers are targeting people who are desperate to find jobs. Beware of any job offer, work-at-home scheme or business opportunity that promises big money for little work and no experience.

3. Keep your computer safe. If you haven't already done so, install anti-virus software on your computer and check regularly for software and operating system updates and patches. Don't open attachments or click on links in emails unless you can confirm the email came from someone you trust.

4. Never wire money to someone you don't know. Many scams require that the victim wire money back to the scammers. Scammers know that tracking money sent via Money Gram or Western Union is extremely difficult. Once you've wired the money, it's nearly impossible to get it back.

5. Get everything in writing. Get every verbal agreement in writing to limit miscommunication and misunderstandings between what you and the business. Always be sure to write down the name of the representative with whom you spoke.

6. Ask BBB for help. If you're unable to resolve a problem with a business or have been ripped off by a scammer, file a complaint. Your complaint will go on record and may help others when dealing with that company. Use the BBB to educate and empower yourself to make informed decisions.

7. Fight identity theft. Shred paper documents that include sensitive financial and personal data and dispose of computers, cell phones and digital data safely. Take advantage of the free paper shredding events that the BBB hosts.

8. Read the fine print-especially for "free" trial offers. "Free" trial offers often result in repeated charges to your credit or debit cards, sometimes amounting to hundreds of dollars every month. Read the terms and conditions of any "free" trial offer before submitting credit or debit card numbers.

9. Fight fake check fraud. Thanks to advances in printing technology, scammers have the ability to create professional-looking phony checks. Educate yourself on the common types of check fraud and be extremely wary of checks that come with claims that you've won the lottery, are eligible for a government grant or have landed a job as a secret shopper. These are almost always scams.

10. Safeguard your personal information. Never give out your credit card, bank account, driver's license or Social Security numbers to anyone you don't know, no matter how tempting the offer is. When in doubt, contact your bank directly or government agencies to check the legitimacy.

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How to Register for AlertTC Notifications

From a countywide power outage to severe flooding, you never know where and when a disaster may strike.

All you can do prior is make sure you took steps to be prepared.

One important step you can take for preparation is registering for AlertTC, Tulare County's mass notification system. AlertTC is designed to keep you informed of emergencies and other time-sensitive messages.

By registering with AlertTC, messages from Tulare County or city in which you live or work may be sent to your home, cell or business phone.

You may also select multiple locations for which to receive alerts, andmanage multiple members' contact information from your account. Text messages may also be sent to cell phones, e-mail accounts and hearing-impaired devices.

After registration, you can be assured that if a disaster strikes in your town or neighborhood, you will receive notifications such as evacuation routes, shelter-in-place notices, severe weather warnings and updates, power outage notices, and road closure information.

To register online, visit www.tularecounty.ca.gov/alerttc. Residents who do not have online access can call the Tulare County Office of Emergency Services at 624-7495.

The Office of Emergency Services is located at:

5957 S. Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, CA 93277

Vander Poel

Continued from p. 1

Public Safety. The Board, in collaboration with the Sheriff's Department, Resource Management Agency and County Counsel, began crafting a detailed marijuana policy in hopes of further enhancing safety within the communities of Tulare County. Also, the Community Based Officer Program was continued in several unincorporated communities in the county, despite the termination of the grant that initially funded the program. Thanks to the work of Dennis Lehman and the Code Enforcement Division and the assistance of county partners in Animal Control, Health and Human Services, and the Sheriff's Department, a Nuisance Property Abatement Program was established and is on its way to cleaning up the county and hopefully becoming a self-sustaining program with lasting impacts. Tulare County also secured an additional $40 million grant to construct new correctional facilities in the north part of the county.

Tulare County also continued to make significant investments in our Youth through the Step Up Program, summer work programs for youth, and recognition of outstanding achievements by our young residents.

We also continued to strengthen Tulare County by building communities. There were many ways that we were able to work towards this, but one of the most tangible in 2013, was the work done by the Tulare County Flood Commission and Resource Management Agency Staff. The three initial projects that are being designed and or constructed are the Juvenile Detention Facility near Cottonwood Creek project, the Seville-Sontag Ditch project, and the Yettem-Button Ditch project. These projects will have a long term impact in the county.

2013 was also a year of improved accessibility of the Board of Supervisors to Tulare County residents. Five meetings were held in each Supervisorial District, occurred in the evenings, and were very well received. In addition, the Board also hosted the first ever joint meeting between the county and the Tule River Tribal Council in an effort to break down barriers and improve communication with the sovereign nation.

Financially, 2013 was a solid year for Tulare County. While many of our fellow counties and cities throughout the state utilized reserves to make their budgets, we were able to increase our reserves and pay down debt at the same time. We were also able to improve compensation to some of the employee groups that were furthest away from comparable pay in other jurisdictions.

In conclusion, I think that 2013 was a great year for Tulare County and its residents. I want to thank my colleagues, county administration and all county departments and employees for their tireless and outstanding work to improve life in our county.

Gurrola

Continued from p. 1

said, was in her rear-view mirror.

"If anything, it shows how much I will fight for the Fifth District and stand up for what needs to be done," she said. "People may not have agreed with me, but they supported me because I stood up. That's what I am."

She also acknowledged her unique position as a Latina candidate for the board, which hasn't seen many Latinas -- or women -- serving on it in recent years.

"I look at the world a little bit differently," Gurrola said with a laugh. "I have a different set of eyeglasses.

"I see it as an opportunity for not just me, but for the district and the county to have a Latina woman on the board of supervisors," she said.

While she's started some fundraising, her strategy for voter outreach isn't based on money and advertising campaigns; she says she prefers a "grassroots" approach, reaching out to voters directly and letting them know who she is, and where she stands on the issues.

"Everybody can come up and voice their concerns, but your vote can change the direction that this county, that the Fifth District goes into. And it can open the door for so many others," she said.

"We're just making that turn towards economic improvement. We want to continue moving forward in that direction. We want businesses to continue coming to California, and we want them to continue coming to Tulare County."

Tulare County Animal Control Needs Your Help

The Tulare County Animal Control program provides food and shelter for unwanted, stray, sick and injured animals in addition to dog licensing services. They also respond to emergencies, including dog bites, vicious animals, reports of animal neglect, and public complaints.

Tulare County Animal Control helps to reduce animal overpopulation by promoting and providing spay/neutering services and educating the public on appropriate pet care. They help to reduce the dangers and nuisances caused by irresponsible pet ownership and protect pets from abuse, neglect, and homelessness.

The Tulare County Animal Shelter also has many wonderful dogs and cats in need of loving homes. They try to have special adoption events at convenient locations throughout the count every Saturday. This Saturday, January 18th, adoptions are happening at the Petco on Mooney Blvd from 10am – 4pm. On Saturday, January 25th, the adoption clinic will be at the PetsMart in Porterville on 1265 W. Henderson Ave from 9am – 3pm.

You can also go out to their facility on the corner of Lovers Lane and Avenue 256 where they have a little cat house to sit and socialize with the cats to see which one you want. Their address is 14131 Avenue 256, Visalia, CA 93292, (559) 636-4050.

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- Dry food (dog and cat)
- Trash bags
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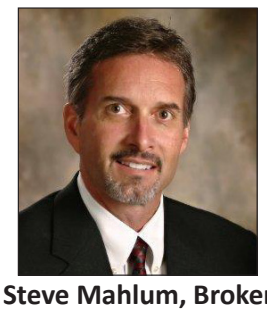
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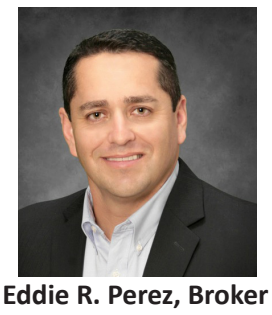
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News in Brief...

TULARE CITY COUNCIL TO LOSE AT LEAST ONE INCUMBENT

The Tulare City Council election in November is guaranteed to result in the loss of at least one incumbent. Two of the current council members, David Macedo and Skip Barwick, both live in District Four and have both been serving at large.

The City of Tulare approved by-district elections a few years ago and the November contest will be the second conducted by district.

Meanwhile, District Two (northwest Tulare) will be represented by new voice, since none of the current city council members live there.

VISALIA CONVENTION CENTER TO HOST 2014 STATEWIDE PISTACHIO DAY

The Visalia Convention Center will host 2014 Statewide Pistachio Day on Wednesday, January 29, from 8am to 1pm. The event, co-sponsored by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources and the California Pistachio Research Board, is designed to deliver the latest research-based production practices in a format that enables prospective or current pistachio growers, production managers and pest control consultants to better achieve their pistachio-growing goals.

The program covers diverse topics ranging from pest, nutrient, and disease management, emerging rootstock issues, a new method of chill accumulation chill land updates on the mechanical pruning trial.

Early registration fee is $30 and includes attendance, lunch and refreshments. After January 17, registration will increase to $35. On-site registration will be $40.

Online registration and other event information can be found at http://ucanr.edu/sites/pistachioday/. For more information, contact Louise Ferguson at LFerguson@UCDavis.edu or 737-3061.

ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN LEADER CONNIE CONWAY WARNS AGAINST REPEATING BUDGET MISTAKES

Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, of Tulare, issued the following statement after Governor Jerry Brown released his 2014-15 budget blueprint:

"While the budget is out sooner than the governor planned, it gives us more time to review the fine print. I hope that Gov. Brown is successful in convincing his fellow Democrats to resist the urge to spend away any fiscal progress the state has made. We've been down this road before and I'd strongly caution my legislative friends across the aisle from traveling it again. In the not-so-distant past, California has seen unexpected revenue spikes that have evaporated overnight – quickly turning modest surpluses into enormous deficits.

"Now is the time to tackle the wall of debt, avoid the budget mistakes of the past and invest in our future so that our economy grows. The governor sounds receptive to those ideas and Assembly Republicans stand ready to work in good faith to achieve those goals."

CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The Visalia Police Department is now accepting applications for this years' "Citizens Police Academy."

The Citizens Police Academy is a ten-week course designed to acquaint prospective volunteers with the inner workings of the Visalia Police Department while being trained to become a "Volunteer in Police Service" (VIPS). All instructors are Visalia Police Department personnel trained in various fields of expertise such as police ethics, crime scene investigation, homicide and burglary investigation, K-9, SWAT, bomb unit, patrol procedures, traffic and DUI procedures, gang and narcotics enforcement, and crime prevention.

Upon successful completion of this course and a background investigation, members will be sworn in as a VIPS, ready to assist in essential non-hazardous duties.

Classes are scheduled to begin Thursday, March 6 from 6-9pm.

Applications are available through January 31 at: Visalia Police Department (VPD) Headquarters, 303 S. Johnson St.; and VPD District 2 Office, 4100 S. County Center.

For more information, call Sgt. Jim Carr at 713-4153.

VISALIA CHAMBER TO OFFER BUSINESS ACADEMY SEMINAR SERIES

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce announced the launch of a new monthly seminar series entitled the Visalia Business Academy (VBA). Each month, the Visalia Business Academy will offer seminars and workshops focused on the various business issues. The topics are chosen by the membership. Frequent surveys will be conducted throughout the year to maintain a constant flow of feedback and suggestions, in order to mold this program to fit the needs of the membership. As business needs change, the VBA will adjust topics to serve local business needs.

VBA seminars will be held on the third Thursday of each month at the Brandman University Visalia campus (649 S. County Center Dr.) from 9-10 am. Each seminar will be presented by a local industry expert.

The following topics are currently on the schedule:

January 16th – The Executive Toolkit, a technology based seminar – presented by Tim Torian, Torian Group.

February 20th – 2014 Labor Law Update – presented by Verla Oliver, SinglePoint Outsourcing Inc.

March 20th – Managing Relationships with Technology – presented by Tim Torian, Torian Group.

Reservations (734-5876) are required and space is limited. Chamber members receive free seats based on their membership tier, additional seats are $15; non-members seats are $30 each or $250 for an Annual Pass.

DICKEY'S BARBECUE PIT OPENS FOR BUSINESS

Dickey's Barbecue Pit in Visalia opened for business on January 9, and the first 50 dine-in customers received a gift card. The opening celebration continued for three days.

"This is a growing community with great people – we've received so much positive feedback," said local franchise owner Kelly Brooks. "This area needed a new barbecue restaurant with top-notch quality food and service."

Owners Donnie and Kelly Brooks are from Tulare. Prior to owning a Dickey's Barbecue, Kelly worked in the field of education and Donnie worked for Southern California Edison. The couple plans to open another location in Tulare. This is the 41st Dickey's Barbecue Pit to open in California.

Dickey's Barbecue Pit in Visalia is located at 4119 S. Mooney Blvd. in the Packwood Creek Shopping Center.

UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL TO HOLD INFORMATION NIGHTS AT COS

University Preparatory High School (UPHS) is accepting applications for students in grades 9-12. Parents of students who are interested in obtaining more information about UPHS (located on the College of the Sequoias campus) should attend one of the upcoming informational meetings to be held January 16 or 30 at 6pm in the Mariposa Building on the COS Visalia Campus.

A joint project of the Tulare County Office of Education and COS, UPHS is a free public high school in the early college model. UPHS students attend COS college classes and accumulate a significant number of college units while they are still in high school. They learn to navigate the complexities of higher education, develop college readiness, and experience challenging high school and college curriculum over the course of their high school experience.

UPHS has the highest accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, as well as approval from the University of California for A-G academic classes. A small and friendly school with an excellent learning environment, UPHS accepts students of all skill levels who are highly motivated, seeking college preparation and leadership opportunities, and who want to give back to the community. At UPHS, students can enjoy ASB student activities, college/university visits, theater arts, sports, music, fine arts, dance, journalism and service learning opportunities.

For more information, visit www.tcoe.org/uphs, or to make an application for enrollment, call Principal John Kelly at 679-2580.

PUBLIC MEETING SET FOR MATHENY TRACT TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Residents of Matheny Tract are encouraged to participate in a community meeting as part of a transportation infrastructure plan. The meeting, the first of three, will be held from 3:30-5pm on Saturday, January 25, at Palo Verde School, 9637 Ave. 196 in Tulare.

Consultant Omni-Means, as well as staff of Tulare County Resource Management Agency, will be on hand to present the goals of the plan and will then encourage public comment on concerns, frustrations, goals and priorities for transportation in Matheny.

The plan is intended to specifically focus on needs such as sidewalks, lighting, transit, roads, bike paths, and pedestrian access and safety. With the completed plan in hand, Tulare County RMA will be able to work toward securing grant funding to make improvements in the small, unincorporated community.

Refreshments and activities for children will be provided. For more information, contact Gary Mills at Omni-Means at 734-5895 or gmills@omnimeans.com.

DEADLINES ANNOUNCED FOR CANDIDATE PETITIONS

Tulare County Registrar of Voters Rita A. Woodard announced petition deadlines for candidates for the June 3rd Primary Election. Petition forms may be picked up from the Tulare County Elections Office, 5951 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia. The Elections Office is open 7:30am to 5:30pm Monday through Thursday, and 8am to noon on Friday.

The deadline for signatures-in-lieu for judicial office candidates is February 5.

The nonrefundable filing fee and/or signatures-in-lieu must be presented at the time the candidate files a Declaration of Intent. Judicial Office Declaration of Intent filing period opens January 27 and closes February 5.

The deadline for signatures-in-lieu for federal and local office candidates is February 20. The nonrefundable filing fee and/or signatures-in-lieu must be presented at the time the candidate picks up the nomination packet during the nomination period.

The nomination period opens Monday, February 10 and closes Friday, March 7. For more information, call the Elections Office at 624-7300.

BEN-E-LECT FOUNDATION OFFERS MENTOR TRAINING TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The BEN-E-LECT Foundation is looking to make a significant impact on Tulare County in 2014 by growing its mentor program, the On Purpose Project. The foundation is kicking off the year with its first mentor training session in January. It is a two-part training, totaling four hours and will be held from 6:30-8:30pm on Tuesday, January 21 and Wednesday, January 22 at the BEN-E-LECT offices in Visalia. The training is offered at no cost and is open to anyone who has a heart for helping another.

Mentors are partnered with same-sex mentees who are attempting to get their lives on track by participating in programs offered by our partner organizations. So far, the foundation has seen great success in the mentoring pairs made in 2013.

Mentors have walked alongside mentees as they've gone through addiction recovery and taken steps to find work, find homes, establish new healthy relationships and learn to love themselves again (or in some in some cases for the first time).

Mentor volunteers are being sought to attend the training and learn more about mentoring. Experience is not necessary. The best mentors have proven to be people who live a healthy lifestyle and have an hour a week to spare listening free of judgment to a mentee.

To sign up for January training or to learn more about the On Purpose Project, call Program Coordinator Alicia Reynolds at 302-2388. There is an abundance of information about the program available online at www.benelectfoundation.org.

Kaweah Delta Board of Directors Approves New Clinic Proposal

The Kaweah Delta Health Care District Board of Directors unanimously approved a proposal to establish a clinic to ensure that Tulare County residents get care to manage the nation's leading causes of death and disability.

The 12,000-square-foot clinic, expected to open in May, will help people manage chronic diseases such as heart failure, hypertension and diabetes at 325 S. Willis St. in Visalia. Managing such diseases is often a struggle for patients for a variety of reasons, said Regina Sawyer, director of Care Management at Kaweah Delta Health Care District.

"They may not have access to care, they may need to be reminded to take their medications regularly or they may struggle with adopting recommended lifestyle changes," Sawyer said. "When they are not able to manage their disease, they end up in the hospital. This is a chance to work with patients on an outpatient basis and keep them well."

In addition, the clinic will coordinate care for people following a heart attack, before having open heart or valve surgery at Kaweah Delta Medical Center, or following the diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pneumonia, asthma or bronchitis. As a result, the clinic is expected to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits, reduce the length of stay for patients at the medical center, and reduce 30-day mortality rates for patients.

Dr. Ronald Marconi, a family practice physician, called the clinic concept exciting during the January 6 Kaweah Delta Board of Directors meeting. "It's a very exciting concept when you read the literature and understand that this is going to have the most impact on patients with congestive heart failure," he said. "They are going to live longer if they get the proper care."

At the clinic, patients will be seen by a nurse practitioner and, following care, they will return to their primary care physician. If a patient does not have a primary care physician, the clinic will link them to one for care.

The clinic will offer infusion, complete on-site laboratory testing, with a future draw station, cardiology services such as electrocardiogram, echocardiogram and treadmill stress testing, along with x-rays, IV therapy, education programs, pharmacy services and more. The clinic would be open from 8:30am to 5pm on weekdays and would open on Saturdays for an additional day of infusion.

EXETER CLINIC WELCOMES PSYCHIATRIST

Kaweah Delta Health Care District welcomed Elizabeth Tully, M.D., a psychiatrist serving adults and children, to Exeter Health Clinic. Dr. Tully is board certified in adult, adolescent and child psychiatry. She has 28 years of experience serving patients in California including the Central Valley. Additionally, she serves as medical director of the Exeter clinic's biobehavioral program and is one of two associate program directors of Kaweah Delta's Psychiatry Residency Program. The program is the third of Kaweah Delta's residency programs and is set to welcome its first class of residents in July 2014.

Tully earned her medical degree from the University of Turin Medical School in Turin, Italy. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology and a Master of Science Degree in Biology from Wayne State University, in Detroit, Michigan. She completed a psychiatry research fellowship at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

NEW INFORMATIONAL VIDEO SERIES LAUNCHED

Kaweah Delta Health Care District is launching a new video series, called the "KD Newsreel" to help inform the community about health news and services at Kaweah Delta. Each newsreel is less than five minutes and can be viewed at Kaweah Delta's monthly board meetings or on Kaweah Delta's YouTube Channel.

The January edition of the newsreel includes segments on seeking care during cold and flu season and information on how to pay a bill after receiving care at Kaweah Delta.

FREE ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM SCREENING

People who are 60 years or older, or have a family history of abdominal aortic aneurysms have the chance to be tested for the condition for free from 8am to noon on Saturday, January 25, at Kaweah Delta Imaging Center, 4949 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia. To get screened, people must register in advance by calling 625-9503. Those tested should wear comfortable clothes and should not eat or drink anything six hours before their appointment.

COS

Continued from p. 1

capacity and sustain permanent change in the culture, we adopted a contemporary metaphor. Much like the Apple iPhone 5s and Microsoft Windows 11, we are COS 2.0 – a new updated, upgraded version of our previous selves.

COS 2.0 is defined by new operating manuals that prescribe the roles, responsibilities and annual timelines for the important systems of governance and decision-making, integrated planning, and resource allocation. Gone are the days of projects and programs starting, stopping and starting again with the change of every new senior administrator. Perhaps most importantly we have defined clear processes for fulfilling our responsibilities in college operations and compliance separate from our opportunities in employee representation, advocacy and negotiations. We have worked to eliminate the dysfunction that historically created barriers to maintaining accreditation standards in the past.

Our COS Show Cause Report was submitted in October, and the ACCJC sent a visiting team to review COS in November. That team also submitted a written report to the ACCJC, and the commission acted on COS' accreditation this month. We will receive our action letter in early February.

We implemented all of our new systems this past fall semester. Operational systems take a full year to complete the first round of the cycle of continuous evaluation and improvement. While we are extremely confident in the effectiveness and sustainability of all the changes we have made, it is unlikely that the ACCJC will restore COS to a state of fully re-affirmed accreditation. "Show cause" is the most serious level of sanction, so we expect to have our sanction level reduced but to remain on some level of "warning" only to allow for a full year of new systems to be completed to confirm our commitment and follow-through.

We are better, stronger and more effective now than ever before. As we enter our 88th year of service to the South Valley, we can say with great pride and confidence that we look forward to serving our region for another 88 years and the future for COS looks bright.

Stan Carrizosa is the President/Superintendent of College of the Sequoias.

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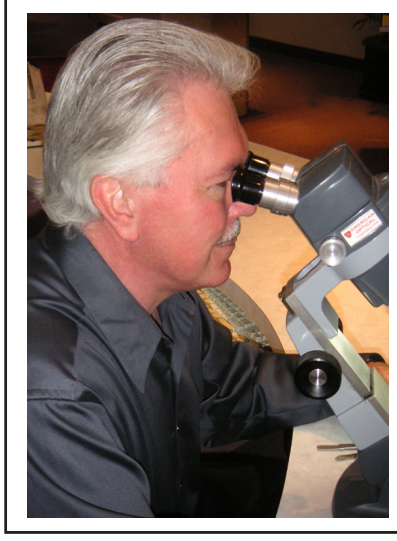

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Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

WHO IS RUNNING THIS STATE? NOT LOS ANGLES

Anyone who reads this column, or is interested in politics, knows that all of California's statewide elected offices are held by Democrats. But did you know that they are also all held by Northern Californians? No wonder the inland counties want to secede from their own state. They are not very well represented.

The longest serving governor in California's history is Governor Jerry Brown. He has also served as secretary of state, attorney general and the mayor of Oakland. Governor Brown was born in San Francisco. Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom's roots run deep in the Bay Area. Not only was he the mayor of, but is a fourth-generation San Franciscan. Both California's senators are from the Bay Area with Sen. Barbara Boxer from Marin and Sen. Dianne Feinstein from San Francisco.

Bill Lockyer, state treasurer, has spent more than 40 years in state elected office. He attended the University of California, Berkeley, and began his political career as a school board member of the San Leandro Unified School District, and was California coordinator of Senator George McGovern's 1972 campaign for the presidency.

Dave Jones, state insurance commissioner, was a member of the Sacramento City Council and Tom Torlakson, superintendant of public information, is from Contra Costa County's Mount Diablo Unified School District.

According to the website *Capitol Weekly*, "L.A. doesn't vote in as high numbers because less of them are absentee, it has this impact on the races. And you can see all our statewide officers…are from northern California… L.A. is bigger than the Bay Area, but in terms of voter turnout in a primary, because of the low absentee rates in L.A. County, L.A. is actually smaller than the Bay Area in turnout."

The secretary of state, Debra Bowen, the person in charge of my favorite website ever, and John Chiang, state controller, don't fit my thesis so they aren't included.

AND LASTLY FOR THE RIDICULOUS

This has nothing to do with Political Fix but I just had to reprint it. According to the *Fresno Bee*, "The Insane Clown Posse sued the U.S. Justice Department last Wednesday over a 2011 FBI report that describes the rap-metal duo's devoted fans, "the Juggalos" as a dangerous gang, saying the designation has tarnished reputations and hurt business."

If you are going to call yourself the "Insane Clown Posse," you don't need any help from the FBI in tarnishing your reputation.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Route changes effective January 11th.

SERVICE CHANGE

Routes 3 - 8A & 8B will change from 30 minute service to 45 minute service.

WEEKEND

Route 6 will add one weekend bus for faster service.

NEW

7-Day Pass:
- General Public: $10
- Senior/Disabled: $7.50

For more information detailing these route adjustments visit **VisaliaTransit.com** or call **1-877-40 GO GREEN** (1-877-404-6473).

VISALIA TRANSIT

Flu Numbers Up; Vaccinations Encouraged

Tulare County residents are strongly encouraged to get their flu vaccinations, as the influenza infection is on the rise, and the H1N1 strain, the pandemic influenza strain, has been detected. This influenza strain is a component of the current seasonal flu vaccine, so vaccination of everyone over six months of age and particularly anyone with high-risk health conditions is critically important.

Influenza is a respiratory infection that produces fever, chills, sore throat, muscle aches, and cough lasting a week or more.

"Receiving a flu vaccine this season is one of the most important things that you can do for yourself to stay healthy," said County Health Officer Dr. Karen Haught.

Vaccination is recommended for everyone over the age of six months, and the vaccination is available at physicians' offices and local clinics, at many local pharmacies, or through the Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) immunization program. HHSA immunization program staff can be reached at 685-5725. At this time, the vaccine is widely available in the community.

It is especially important for high-risk groups to be vaccinated. These groups include:

- Any person with a chronic medical condition that requires frequent medical attention. Examples include asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease and chronic liver disease.
- Pregnant women
- Any person who will have contact with an infant less than six months of age during the influenza season
- Children under the age of five
- Adults 55 years of age and older.
- Good health habits to practice if you are ill include:
- Stay home if you are ill
- Wash your hands with soap and hot water
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

For the expanded monthly flu clinic schedule, visit www.tchhsa.org under the "Spotlight" section and the TulareCountyHHSA Facebook social media page.

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Candidate
for Governor
Tim Donnelly
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Tulare Masonic Hall
135 W. Tulare Ave

'Privacy For All Students' Wins in Court

In a strongly worded tentative ruling, a Sacramento Superior Court judge directed the California secretary of state to count petitions submitted in two northern California counties for a referendum effort to overturn AB 1266, California's co-ed bathroom law.

The secretary of state had refused to count signatures timely submitted in Tulare and Mono counties. In Tulare County, mailroom personnel initially refused to accept the petitions from a courier. In Mono County, the package was delivered but not opened for a number of days.

The problems in both counties resulted from the statutory filing deadline falling on a Sunday in the middle of a three-day weekend. Privacy For All Students, the organization that promoted the referendum, arranged for courier delivery before the Sunday deadline in both counties. While each of the counties reported the signatures to state elections officials, the secretary of state refused to count any of the signatures submitted in these counties.

"It is a shame that we had to go to court to assure that the citizens of Tulare and Mono would not be disenfranchised by the arbitrary actions of the secretary of state," said Gina Gleason, proponent of the referendum.

The opinion, delivered by Judge Allen Sumner, concluded that PFAS actually had until Tuesday, November 12, to file the petitions, due to the weekend and the Monday holiday. The secretary of state initially told PFAS that signatures needed to be delivered to each of the 58 counties by close of business the previous Friday, or earlier if the registrar of voters in a county was closed on Friday.

PFAS made arrangements with some counties to accept signatures on Sunday, November 10. The secretary of state conceded that petitions delivered on Sunday would be accepted, but signatures would not be counted after that. Based on this, PFAS did not attempt to deliver petitions as late as November 12. Petitions were delivered to the two counties in dispute on Friday, November 8, and Saturday, November 9.

"The process of collecting 504,760 valid signatures in 90 days is tough enough. But the secretary of state seemed determined to shorten the time we were given wherever possible," said Karen England, a spokesperson for PFAS. "We have slowly realized that the secretary of state is not an unbiased referee in this process but an advocate for the co-ed bathroom law."

Nearly 620,000 signatures presented in support of the referendum are being validated in a joint process by the counties and the state. Presentation of those signatures in November suspended the implementation of the law. However, officials at the office of the secretary of state are erroneously advising that the law became effective on January 1. PFAS is advising school personnel that the law was suspended based on the presentation of the signatures and that the law will only go into effect if the signatures are determined to be inadequate or the voters approve the law on the November ballot.

For more information about the referendum to overturn California's co-ed bathroom law, visit the PFAS web page at www.privacyforallstudents.com.

Citizens Advisory Committee Accepting Applications

The City of Visalia is accepting applications from interested citizens for a vacancy on the Citizens Advisory Committee.

The Citizens Advisory Committee acts as a liaison between the general public and the City Council concerning community issues. The committee currently has vacancies for two voting members and four alternate members.

The Committee will interview applicants at 5:30pm Wednesday, Feb. 5, at the Council Chambers, 707 W. Acequia. In order to be interviewed, your application will need to be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by Monday, Jan. 27. Applications may be mailed in or brought to City Hall North at 425 E. Oak Ave, Suite 301, Visalia, CA 93291 or email it to cityclerk@ci.visalia.ca.us.

Applications are kept for a period of two years. For more information, visit the City of Visalia's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us "Committees/Commissions" to view the informational handbook and application, or contact the City Clerk's Office at (559) 713-4512.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Obamacare Costs County Employees and Taxpayers Millions

PETE VANDER POEL AND DEBBIE POOCHIGIAN

No matter which way you turn, or whatever your interests, you can't miss the news about the Affordable Care Act, also known as "Obamacare." Both opponents and proponents aren't shy about voicing their opinions about this slow-developing program. It's no secret that even the most ardent supporters of Obamacare are distressed at the problems with the rollout. Deadlines are everchanging for all eligible individuals, including children, to sign up for health insurance under the Obamacare umbrella. Unless a narrow exception applies, those without insurance will be penalized at an increased rate each year and, in the future, will be assessed a penalty for noncompliance.

People with individual plans and young adults are hit the hardest under this law. Millions of Americans have already received notices of cancellation of their existing insurance policies and face possible higher premiums with new policies if – and this is the big question – they are able to buy a replacement policy through an exchange or in the private market. In California alone, reports suggest that as many as one million individuals have received cancellation notices. On top of these issues, many patients face the prospect of losing their current doctors and will have to search for new physicians willing to accept them as patients.

Local governments are not immune to the challenges of higher health care costs and the upheaval and uncertainty of the new law. While the impact on individuals in the private market is becoming well known and hurtful, there is a significant local impact of the so-called "Affordable" Care Act that is being overlooked.

The San Joaquin Valley Insurance Authority (SJVIA) was established in October 2009 through a partnership between the counties of Tulare and Fresno for the purpose of achieving health care savings for employees and taxpayers through volume purchasing and reduced administrative costs. Since its inception, the SJVIA has grown to include the cities of Ceres, Farmersville, Gustine, Newman, Reedley, Riverbank, Sanger, San Joaquin, Shafter, Tulare, Wasco and Waterford. This consolidation has saved taxpayers millions of dollars while offering sound insurance policies and benefits to employees. Ultimately, savings in health care costs without reducing coverage are in everyone's interest.

Unfortunately, just as our local efforts began to produce significant savings, the SJVIA received notification from the federal government that under Obamacare, our counties must implement costly mandates. These mandates have cost an estimated additional $1.75 million to $4.2 million. But there is more. Under Obamacare there are also additional costs to the SJVIA in 2014 and its participating employees and counties in the form of fees and taxes of $2.3 million. These added costs hurt employees and take money away from our local economy.

What services or benefits do county employees, taxpayers and local public agencies receive for these new charges? Arguably very little, if any. It seems to be just part of the financing scheme – another pocket of cash to pick to subsidize bigger government. This is happening to local insurance plans throughout America as Washington experiments with our personal health care.

These additional costs undermine the very important work and progress we have made in Tulare and Fresno counties to contain the rising costs of health care and balance budgets. Just as we are developing a regional approach that takes advantage of economies of scale in the health care marketplace, the federal government swoops down and sweeps away the fruits of our success.

Our local public agencies, city and county employees, taxpayers and families will ultimately bear the costs. We deserve better and call upon the President and Congress to fix this mess they created.

Pete Vander Poel is a supervisor representing District 2 of Tulare County and is also the president of the SJVIA. Debbie Poochigian is a supervisor representing District 5 of Fresno County and is the vice-president of the SJVIA.

It's Show Time!

CRAIG WHEATON, VUSD SUPERINTENDENT

Show time is coming once again! For many years, our community has grown accustomed to excellent high school performing arts productions. Everything from band to dance, we have wonderful performances all year long. High school musicals are perhaps the best example of the long standing tradition of supporting the performance arts. And that tradition continues this month with the year's musical choices:

Visalia Unified Superintendent Craig Wheaton

"Seussical the Musical" will be performed by El Diamante High School and La Joya Middle School on January 17, 18, 23, 24, 25 & 26. This musical is based on several books by Dr. Seuss. It is a rather complex combination of stories, but the result is absolutely delightful. From the Cat in the Hat singing "Oh, the Thinks You Can Think" and Horton Hears a Who protecting his tiny friends, to a trip to McElligot's Pool ("It's Possible"). There is something for everyone who enjoys these famous books.

"Annie" will be performed by Mount Whitney High School on February 6, 7 & 8. This musical tells the story of a scrappy orphan girl who wins the heart of the rich Daddy Warbucks and all of his employees. The song, "It's the Hard-Knock Life," shows the misery of life in the orphanage while "Tomorrow" shows the faith and hopes of the endearing Annie. Miss Hannigan and her brother Rooster come up with a plan to take advantage of Annie's good fortune in "Easy Street."

"High School Musical" will be performed by Green Acres Little Theater on February 6, 7, 8 & 9. This musical is a story about two high school juniors from rival cliques--Troy Bolton, captain of the basketball team, and Gabriella Montez, a beautiful and shy transfer student who excels in math and science. Together, they try out for the lead parts in their high school musical, and as a result, divide the school. Despite other students' attempts to thwart their dreams, Troy and Gabriella resist peer pressure and rivalry, inspiring others along the way not to "stick to the status quo." Songs include: "Start of Something New," "We're All in This Together."

"Little Women" will be performed by Redwood High School on February 20, 21 & 22. This musical is very close to the novel. We follow the lives of the four March sisters (Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy) as they move from girlhood into the beginning of their adult years. The girls are joined by their mother, Marmee, and neighbor boy, Laurie, to tell their tale of strength and love. Songs include: "An Operatic Tragedy," "Off to Massachusetts," "Astonishing" and "The Fire within Me."

"Beauty and the Beast" will be performed by Golden West High School on April 2, 3, 4 & 5. The classic tale, as retold by the Disney Company, will be well known to most students. Belle is the prettiest girl in the village but is not interested in any of the local men. She gives herself up as a prisoner to save her father's life and ends up falling in love with the Beast. Songs include: "Something There," "Human Again" and the title track "Beauty and the Beast."

This year's musical selections are excellent choices for family entertainment. So, get your friends and family together, go out and get your tickets early because several shows will be sell-outs, and prepare to be entertained!

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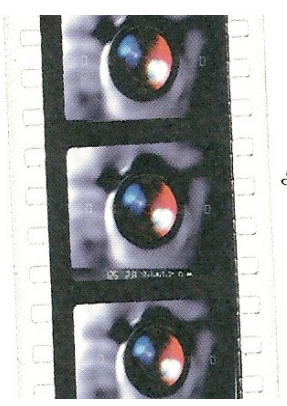

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Trap/Kill is Taxpayer Waste

Your story about 100 cats trapped and killed at a cost of $18,500.00 will make news in Los Angles and San Francisco. Thank you for covering this story of taxpayer money waste. Glad the press is still independent in the USA!

Quote "Mooney cats TC Animal Control neither has the facility nor the cages to handle approximately 100 stray cats." Tim Lutz, Health and Human Services manager, has just begun the process of preparing staff to handle the special needs of Mooney Grove's cats and implement the county's plan.

Brad Wilson
Visalia, CA

In Support of Mass Gathering

I am calling on all residents of the cities of Tulare and Visalia to find out when the Tulare County supervisors plan on going in to Mooney's Grove to pick up and kill all the feral cats next time, to gather in on mass gathering and physically protect the cats at all costs.

Nobody has the right to kill a feral cat, only to feed and protect it. If I lived in the area I would make sure they could not pick up any more cats, and I would protect the cats, and feed the cats, for the Trap Neuter Release program. and tell the Tulare County Supervisors to go to Hell.

Patrick Greene
San Antonio, TX

YOUR RESPONSES to POLITICAL WARFARE IN DINUBA

"For the council members that are making accusations of recieving threatening phone calls and or calls to their work place need to make a police report. By making this statements outwardly to the public only leads one to believe that they are being victimized. They are not, they are adult council members that are being recalled by their constituents of their districts. If they want to be heard then they need to go door to door of their district they are representing and ask them (constituents) are they happy how the city is using their tax money in their community. One of your jobs as a council representative is to be the voice of your district not a yes person for the city. All voices need to be heard."

— *Ruth*

"I will always be a Dinuban at heart. It is disappointing how many people are ill-informed or unaware of how politics actually works. Janet is an amazing lady and perfect for the job. I fully support her and Mike. After all no one knows my dad better than me, his faults included!
"An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied proposition, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it." - Mahatma Gandhi"

— *Melissa Smith*

"Whoever is behind these crazy allegation's seriously knows nothing about the Mayor. She is one of the most straight forward, by the book people I know. And well yes some may say I'm a little bias, but I also know her devotion to her city. She loves her community and would do what ever needed to protect it and make it a better place to live. Lastly if you think for a second this is going to run her out of town……..THINK AGAIN!!!"

— *Kari Hinesly*

"Being a public employee who has been cut and who during these tough fiscal times, and having many friends who have been cut in other public sector jobs, it is hard to understand justifying giving raises, when many are still struggling (whether public or private sector). Just because we are doing better fiscally doesn't mean "hey, lets go out and give raises to people making $100,000+" while many are still struggling. Especially when people that are struggling are the ones funding those COLA's. I don't see why it's so hard to understand the public finds it to be distasteful. And I've gotten harassing phone calls before. But you know what, I called the police and the phone calls stopped. Sounds like an easy fix to me. Three easy buttons… 9-1-1.. problem solved…"

— *Roy Orosco*

READER RESPONSE to EMERGENCY OPERATION PLAN

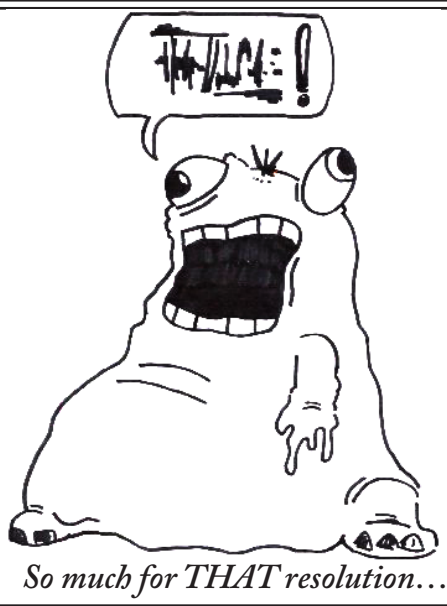
"Since moving back to Visalia 8 years ago I have been asking why we don't implement the (City Initial) Emergency Rescue Team training that so many other cities have done. I took the training when I lived in a Northern Ca. town and found it to be a well organized preparedness program. I realize there is cost involved and perhaps that is why it has not be used here in Visalia.
I do think it is worth consideration."

— *Donna Johnston*

USE YOUR VOICE
COMMENT ONLINE AT OURVALLEYVOICE.COM

Black Tie

ALEX OLDENBOURG



So much for THAT resolution…

YOUR RESPONSES to MOONEY GROVE'S CATS

"You don't have to kill those cats!
They are abandoned animals, it isn't their fault they have to survive on their own. Do we kill people because they are on the streets, or because they are abandoned! Put a stop to this madness!
Isn't it against the law to kill an animal? And why are they killing the geese? Leave the animals alone.
TNR doesn't work in the minds of those people who don't want it to work. One has to be willing to try, in order to know if it will or won't work.
If saves the lives of those cats, then why not try.
And yes, I've taken in stray and abandoned cats. They were given medical care and were fixed and most of all, cared for."

— *Elizabeth Dodson*

"The focus of the debate seems to be on the cats and not the person in charge of the park. Care for the Memorial at the park, use of weapon on the geese and forcing the county into an $18,500 cat killing spree should be what the debate is about. People from all over the world visit Sequoia National Park, often visiting Mooney Park too. Operations at our park should be well run. The people asking for a chance to help out at no cost to the county with the TNR program should be givin' a chance to show it works. The county should consider a new park director. All of this drive to spend $18,500 to kill cats and lack of care to the Memorial is on the team running the park. Time for a change.There is a lot of support right now to bring the city of Visalia's attention on a new beginning for our park. Why not build on a collection of good ideas rather than a huge $18,500 cat killing spree. With a fresh team in place we could bring people together around a better park. The right director could work with everyone. The dept. heads of Tulare Health Services, SPCA and Animal Control do not support current plans from supervisors for the park."

— *Brad Wilson*

"will there be another meeting about saving the cats? there is some good information that can be found at http://www.alleycat.org and they have educational information about the TNR program and why the procedure of "catch and kill" is a failure. there is also more information at http://www.commonsenseforcats.com. i believe they need to change their procedures. it is time for change and i dont understand why they are being so stubborn and ignorant about the TNR program. they are wrong about the cats being a health problem and issue for the park. in Horsham, Pennsylvania there is a historic park named Graeme Park which has a managed feral cat colony and practices the TNR program. why is it not a problem there but yet here at Mooney's Grove the people there who are in charge just cannot let the cats be and keep claiming ridiculous assumptions of things that these cats are causing around the park? Fleas are already in most grounds and where there is dirt or sand there will be fleas. plus if there are volunteers and programs out there to help care for these cats then what is the problem? i feel these people just hate animals and would simple rather kill them then let them be. many parks and campgrounds from state to state have feral cat colonies and instead of trying to kill them off they do the TNR program which works. i believe Mr Cox sounds like a person who does not want to listen to reason nor to try to work together to do what is humane and right for these beautiful cats. he is ignorant and apparently he refuses to become more educated about feral cats and if they are a safety hazard. you can contact the people at Alley Cat and they do have people who have advocates around the nation to help people save cats. there are videos and other information that can be downloaded. it sounds like the people around the community might have to get together and fight and go over these peoples heads. im so angry and it makes me sick."

— *Lori Shepherd*

"These wild cats are killing other natural wildlife that are native to the area and need to be removed from park. I go to the park to enjoy the Natural nature there not cats."

— *Brian D Herrin*

WISHING YOU A JOYFUL AND PROSPEROUS *New Year!*

VALLEY BUSINESS BANK was started 17 years ago by local businessmen to help your business succeed. Our highlights for 2013 include:

- Funded over $50 million in loans to businesses in Tulare, Fresno, and Kings counties
- Named the Visalia Chamber of Commerce's "2013 Large Business of the Year"
- Business Finance Center awards for "Largest Single Project" and "Most Active Lender"
- Earned Bauer Financial Inc.'s Five-Star Superior Rating
- One of eleven California banks profiled in the banking newsletter "The Findley Reports" for exceptional performance

On behalf of the Valley Business Bank team, we offer our sincere thanks to our valued customers, and look forward to serving you in 2014.

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Valley Voice
Valley Scene

Styx

Styx to Headline Visalia Fox Theatre

Styx will take the stage at the Visalia Fox Theater on Thursday, January 23.

Since 1999, the band – Tommy Shaw, James "JY" Young, Lawrence Gowan, Todd Sucherman and Ricky Phillips (along with the occasional appearance by original bassist Chuck Panozzo) – has made two Super Bowl appearances, toured with Def Leppard, Journey, Boston, REO Speedwagon and Bad Company, and recorded two studio albums.

Spawned from a suburban Chicago basement in the early '70s, Styx would eventually transform into the virtual arena rock prototype by the late '70s and early '80s, a result of their soaring power ballads.

Early on, Styx's music reflected such then-current progressive rockers as Emerson, Lake & Palmer and the Moody Blues, as evidenced by such releases as 1972's self-titled debut, 1973's "Styx II, 1974's The Serpent Is Rising," and 1975's "Man of Miracles." While the albums (as well as non-stop touring) helped the group build a substantial following locally, Styx failed to break through to the mainstream, until a track originally from their second album, "Lady" started to get substantial airplay in late 1974 on the Chicago radio station WLS-FM. The song was soon issued as a single nationwide, and quickly shot to number six on the singles chart, as "Styx II" was certified gold.

By this time, however, the group had grown disenchanted with their record label, and opted to sign on with A&M for their fifth release overall, 1975's "Equinox." On the eve of the tour in support of the album, original guitarist John Curulewski abruptly left the band, and was replaced by Shaw, who proved to be the missing piece of the puzzle for Styx, as most of their subsequent releases throughout the late '70s earned at least platinum certification (1976's "Crystal Ball," 1977's "The Grand Illusion," 1978's "Pieces of Eight" and 1979's

Continued on p. 24 »

Locally Filmed Movie with Hollywood Star Power to Premiere in Tulare

"Lost on Purpose," an award-winning feature film shot almost entirely within Tulare County, will be debut during a red carpet premiere event to be held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, February 20, at the Tulare Galaxy Theatres.

The film has not been released into theaters, but has already attracted critical acclaim, including a "Best Directors Award" at Firstglance Film Festival and "Best Film" awards at the Beverly Hills Film Festival, the Reelheart Film Festival and at the TrindieFest Film Festival. "Lost on Purpose" is also nominated for "Best Film" at the Hollywood Film Festival.

Actress Octavia Spencer takes a break from filming scenes for the movie "Lost on Purpose" at Tulare Regional Medical Center to sign copies of "The Help." Photo by Johanna Coyne

Now Ian and Eshom Nelms - the two brothers who wrote and directed "Lost on Purpose" – plan to host a special VIP screening here in Tulare County, where the film takes place.

Attendees of the screening at the Galaxy will be able to participate in a Q and A after the film, and receive a signed 11x17 poster, a digital download of the film, and an invitation to an after party hosted by Bravo Farms and the Tulare County Film Commission where they will sample food by Bravo Farms and eat Rosa Brothers' Ice Cream and hang out and talk with the film's producers, actors, directors and creators. There will also be a special performance by musician Peter Donovan of the band All The Real Girls, as he plays his original tracks from the movie, and a comedy set by renowned comedian and actor Sean Carrigan. The cost of the entire event, including movie, after party, music, humor and food is $25.

"Lost On Purpose" stars Jane Kaczmarek ("Malcolm in the Middle"); James Lafferty ("One Tree Hill"); Aaron Hill ("Greek"); C. Thomas Howell ("Southland"); Dale Dickey ("Winter's Bone") and Academy Award-winning actress Octavia Spencer ("The Help"). The film is about a third generation dairy owner, who's fighting off the region's domineering co-op. To help with the workload, she's hired five renegade ranch hands. Together they fight for love, pride and their vanishing way of life.

"This film showcases many areas in our county – from bucolic summer rafting scenes along the St. Johns River to life on a dairy," Tulare County Film Commissioner Eric Coyne said. "They filmed

Continued on p. 24 »

Anjelah Johnson to Perform at Hanford Fox on January 31

American actress, comedienne, and former NFL cheerleader Anjelah Johnson will bring her stand-up comedy to the Hanford Fox Theatre on Friday, January 31.

Johnson started her career as a professional cheerleader for the Oakland Raiders. As an Oakland Raiderette, she was named "Rookie of the Year" and performed at Super Bowl XXXVII. After that year, she decided to move to Los Angeles to pursue her dream of acting.

She became an Internet sensation with her viral video "Nail Salon" which led to many stand-up and performance opportunities. That same year, she joined the cast of "MADtv" as a series regular, which spawned another internet sensation "Bon Qui Qui." This original character, a disgruntled fast food employee with no filter, has been enjoyed, viewed and replicated by over 55 million people worldwide. After recording and releasing three songs and two music videos for Bon Qui Qui, Johnson signed a record deal with Atlantic Records to release a full album. The songs and the videos are available on iTunes and YouTube.

Anjelah Johnson

Johnson has appeared in numerous ads and commercials, including campaigns for Sprint, Visa, Snickers, Verizon, All-State, K-Swiss and Dryers Ice Cream, and she is currently the

Continued on p. 18 »

Grammy Nominee Tommy Emmanuel to Take Visalia Fox Stage on January 29

Two-time Grammy nominee Tommy Emmanuel will perform at the Visalia Fox Theater at 7:30pm on January 29.

The solo guitarist is one of Australia's most respected musicians. With a professional career spanning five decades, Emmanuel has garnered hundreds of thousands of loyal fans worldwide.

Born into a musical family, Emmanuel got his first guitar at age 4 and was taught to play by his mother. He quickly learned by ear, with no formal instruction, and has never read music. By age 6, he was working as a professional musician in the family band (variously named The Emmanuel Quartet, The Midget Surfaries and The Trailblazers). By the age of 10, young Tommy had already played his way across Australia.

Chet Atkins honored Emmanuel with the title of "Certified Guitar Player" for his contribution to guitar music, a very rare distinction shared by only four other people in the world. After his performance with his brother Phil at the Sydney Olympic Games Closing Ceremony, the world wanted to know who this mysterious Australian guitar virtuoso was. In 2001, Emmanuel released his first

Tommy Emmanuel (Photo by Allan Clarke)

solo-acoustic album, "Only," and his popularity quickly grew, aided by a non-stop touring schedule and increasing exposure in the media.

His album "The Mystery" earned him another Grammy nomination, and in 2008, *Guitar Player Magazine* and

Continued on p. 24 »

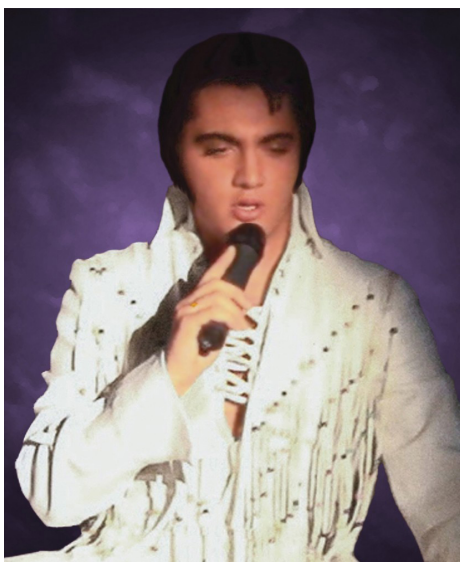
'World's Ultimate Elvis' to Perform at Tachi Palace

Justin Shandor will perform his Elvis Tribute Show at Tachi Palace in Lemoore on January 23.

Since the passing of the King more than 36 years ago, there has arguably never been a tribute artist that has so captivated the look, moves and especially the sound of the King more than Justin Shandor. According to the Jordinaires, (Elvis' original background singers, which Shandor has performed with on several occasions), he has the raw talent that shot Elvis to the top.

His likeness to the King is so close that at one time Graceland emailed a casino where he was performing and told them they could not use a real picture of Elvis to advertise their event – unaware that it was actually a picture of Shandor.

In August 2010, Elvis Presley Enterprises held a contest in Memphis and invited the top Elvis tribute artists from around the world. Shandor came in first place and Graceland named him the "World's Ultimate Elvis." He is the only Elvis tribute artist to make the front page of USA Today, and was featured in an issue of French Vogue magazine.



Justin Shandor as Elvis

Shandor has performed in England, Australia, Malaysia and the Fiji islands, and made several tours to Canada and Sweden. Last year, he performed three consecutive shows for more than 15,000 people in Santiago, Chile, and headlined in Collingwood, Canada, performing for over 25,000 people. Right after singing on David Letterman last February, in front of an estimated 3.5 million viewers, Letterman ran over to Shandor and yelled, "Justin, wonderful, wonderful, do it again, do it again!"

Shandor was asked to sing a song written for Elvis over 40 years ago by one of Elvis's writers - Micheal Jarrett ("I'm Leaving"). His first CD features songs of his original recordings, plus Jarrett's song.

In the last two years, Shandor and his manager have created the World's Ultimate Elvis Band made up of horns, gospel singers, strings and rhythm section that has cloned the music of Elvis' '70s show. The response of Elvis fans has been overwhelming – a lot of women crying, standing ovations, and rave reviews from the media.

For tickets or more information about the 7pm show, visit tachipalace.com.

Britain's Finest

Britain's Finest Brings Beatles Tribute to Cellar Door

Britain's Finest (The Ultimate Tribute to The Beatles) will perform at The Cellar Door in Downtown Visalia on Wednesday, January 29. The band is the only nationally touring Beatles show with cast members whose ages match those of the Beatles in their prime.

The band's "John Lennon" just portrayed Lennon in a Miramax film, which is scheduled for release later this year.

The night will start with a 7:30pm set by King Washington, which is saturated in complex harmonies and intelligent chord progressions alike – a throwback to when rock n' roll was a songwriter's game. The band is fronted by Tyson Kelly, son of pop songwriting legend and Hall of Fame member Tom Kelly.

The Janks, a four-piece blues/folk/rock band fronted by harmonizing brother duo Zachary and Dylan Zmed will follow. Their sound evokes both a sense of depth and levity, while aiming to play at a high level of musicianship and expressivity. The rhythm section, Leon LeDoux on drums and Paul Inder on bass, make for a relentlessly fulfilling foundation that unhinge the feral moments and cradle the tender ones.

Tickets for the 7:30pm 21+ show are $10. For more information, visit snvfoundation.org.

Anjelah

Continued from p. 17

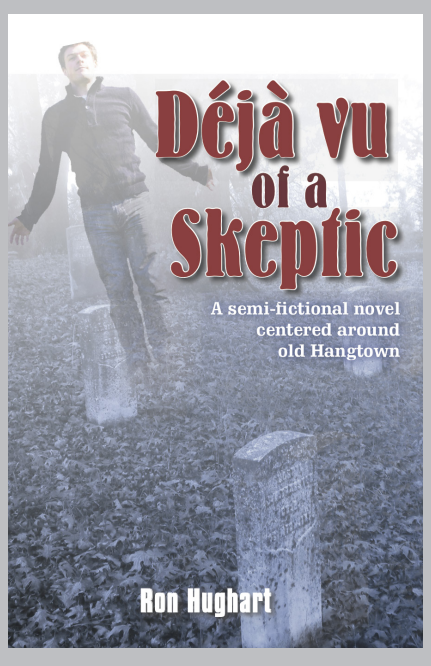
spokesperson for a Texas-based restaurant chain, Taco Cabana. She has also guest starred on shows such as "The Shield," "Ugly Betty" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm," while traveling with her stand-up comedy.

In June 2009, Johnson recorded her first one-hour special for Comedy Central and Warner Brothers Records titled "That's How We Do It." Her second one-hour special, "The Homecoming Show," aired on NUVOtv last summer.

Johnson starred in "Our Family Wedding" alongside Carlos Mencia, Regina King and Oscar-winner Forest Whitaker. She was a live action character in the film "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel" with Jason Lee and the voices of Justin Long, Anna Faris and Amy Poehler. She then leant her voice for the animated film "Marmaduke," which starred Emma Stone, Owen Wilson and Jeremy Piven.

Tickets for the 7:30pm show are $35. For more information, call 584-7423 or visit www.foxhanford.com.

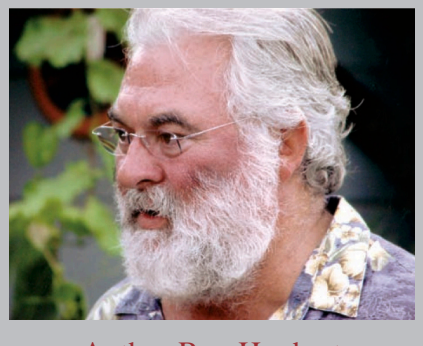
NEW BOOK RELEASE



Deja vu of a Skeptic, the new book by local author Ron Hughart, is now on Amazon Kindle, as are his other titles: **The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl**, and **Beyond the Dust Bowl with a Pocket Full of Peanuts**.

Déjà Vu of a Skeptic is a semi-biographical novel, inspired by an event that happened more than 25 years ago.

While sitting in a small restaurant in Placerville, California, Ron Hughart, a former police officer, became overwhelmed with the feeling that he'd been there before and knew more surroundings than he should.



Author Ron Hughart

"I am a true skeptic about these kinds of stories and have been all my life," he explained. "I think down deep I wanted to be wrong about what was happening to me."

Hughart and his wife, Ann, live in Exeter.

For more information about Ron's books, please visit www.ronhughart.com.

STELLA ARTOIS

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Visalia FOX Theatre

Visalia Players' 'Respect' Showcases Women in Music

NANCY HOLLEY

Everyone wants respect, and the women who sing their way through the 20th century in "Respect: A Musical Journey of Women" want no less.

Dorothy Marcic's musical history of 20th century America includes over 60 familiar songs. Beginning in the 1900s and proceeding through the 1990s, songs from each decade will share memories happy and poignant.

Respect features Samantha Muse and (on the steps) Marla Alberstein and Karen Simpson.

The six women, who bring the history of the last century to life in this Visalia Players' production, span a broad age range and include veteran actors as well as novices. The youngest members of the cast, Jenny Ponce (Hope) and Samantha Muse (Faith) believe they have old souls. They love the music from all the eras.

"I knew I had to be in this show when I saw all the different kinds of music it included," says Ponce. "It gives me an opportunity I've never had before."

Ponce sites "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" from the 1920s "Show Boat" and "New Attitude" (Patti LaBelle) from the 1980s as different performing opportunities.

Muse finds the majority of her multiple characters to be hopeless romantics. As examples, she notes her musical journey from Lillie Langtry ("A Bird in a Gilded Cage") to Debbie Reynolds ("Tammy") and ultimately as Britney Spears ("Oops!...I Did It Again").

New to the Ice House Theatre is Ronnette Torrence, who portrays Rosa Parks. Torrence, a gospel singer who writes songs and hopes to have them published, is very excited about the opportunity to bring Parks to the stage.

"Rosa Parks did something that women didn't do back then," says Torrence. "She was not being rebellious. She was fighting for her rights."

Visalia Player veterans Marla Alberstein (Eden), Karen Simpson (Eve) and Susan Mathews (Dorothy) complete the talented cast. Alberstein has appeared in many musicals in Tulare and Kings counties, including numerous appearances at COS and the Ice House. Simpson last appeared in the popular Ice House musical "Hot Flashes" and is very excited about the opportunity to portray 15 characters with a variety of personalities and voice qualities.

Mathews, whose various character roles range from changes of character from a Norwegian grandmother to Betty Boop and finally Janis Joplin, is also Dorothy, the show's narrator. "Dorothy Marcic is telling the history of America through her family and the music of the 20th century," she explains.

On Sunday February 2, after the matinee, "Back Stage at the Ice House" will be hosted by Sharon DeCoux, a veteran Visalia Player. Audience members will have an opportunity for a behind the scenes look at the show and the opportunity to ask questions and interact with cast/crew.

"Respect" is directed by Leeni Mitchell, with assistance from Darryl Smithey. The show runs for three weekends at the Ice House Theater at Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on January 24, 25 and 31, and February 1, 7 and 8, and matinees are at 2pm on January 26, and February 2 and 9. To purchase tickets, go to the Visalia Players' website at www.visaliaplayers.org, their Facebook page "Visalia Community Players," or call 734-3900.

duoW

Acclaimed Duo to Perform at Main Street Theatre

BILL HAXTON

Music critics have a justifiable reputation for being a hard bunch to please. It frequently happens that people from an audience that gave two standing ovations the night before read about the performance in the paper the next day and wonder if they attended a different concert.

So when critics use phrases like "as spine tingling as fireworks on the Fourth of July," you know something extraordinary must have happened on stage.

That's how one critic described violinist Arianna Warsaw-Fan and cellist Meta Weiss when they performed John Philip Souza's rousing "Stars and Stripes Forever." Not a piece you usually associate with classical cello and violin, right?

Well, that's what duoW is all about. Their mission is to bridge the gap across the centuries to bring the rich and fertile world of the classics to a contemporary audience. You can see this commitment in everything they do. From Souza's "Stars and Stripes" to Servais' "Grand Duo de Concert" with its overt and humorous references to "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "God Save the Queen," then to the uplifting Handel-Halvorsen "Passacaglia." Both the famous Kodaly and Ravel duos are in their repertoire but while their focus is clearly on the classics, they are not confined by them. They often draw on jazz and folk and always perform with riveting dynamism and a true gift for musical storytelling.

Hearing Arianna and Meta perform so beautifully together, it's easy to conclude that their instruments were carved from the same tree. Even more, they themselves might well be spiritual sisters. They have been performing together for over ten years and the silent communication between them is palpable. More recently, they burst onto the international music scene when their gorgeous, semi-gothic supernatural music video for the Handel-Halvorsen "Passacaglia, Ghosts and Flowers," went viral on the Internet. Google it for a taste of the range of creativity Meta and Arianna bring to the stage.

The program is lively and a real audience pleaser. Most of the pieces are rich with melody and expansive harmony: Milhaud's fine "Sonatina," Servais' "Grand Duo," the Kodaly "Duo." Weiss will perform the Prelude to Bach's to "Cello Suite No. 6" as a solo piece, and Warsaw-Fan will perform Nathan Milstein's tribute "Paganiniana."

Both Weiss and Warsaw-Fan received master's degrees from Juilliard and have too many awards to mention here.

duoW will perform at the Main Street Theatre, 307 E. Main, Visalia, at 3pm on Sunday, February 2. Children and students will be admitted free, along with an accompanying adult. Tickets are $12 and available at www.musicatthemain.org and at the door.

Hot Dog Melodrama Returns to Lindsay Theater

The Hot Dog Melodrama Theater returns to the Lindsay Community Theater with "The Girl of the Frozen North," which promises a blizzard of laughs, suspense and plot twists. Performances are January 24, 25 and 31, and February 1 at 7:30pm, and January 26 at 2pm.

"The Girl of the Frozen North" is about young Nellie Neetfoot (Ashley Howerton) on the search for her younger brother who is missing in Yukon Territory. She is joined in the search by her mother, Mrs. Neetfoot (Corey Barnes). Their travels bring them to a hotel run by the lecherous and creepy J. Harrington Cesspool (Tim Gibson) who will do anything for money.

When they arrive, they meet various odd and unusual guests of the hotel. One of the guests is a Shakespearean diva by the name of Cleopatra Pannit (Thomas Crowe) who hasn't quite figured out that Shakespearean women characters are no longer played by men. Her maid is a young lady named Hyacinth Klutz (Carmen C. Lara) who wishes to be just like the Great Ms. Pannit. Also there is the professor (Tim Hurt) who is studying the age reversal rituals of the wampum Eskimo tribe.

Our hero is an ambitious young Mountie (Jake Lomeli) who upon meeting Nellie falls instantly in love. The hotel is kept in order by Nanook the maid (Edgar Padilla) who tidies up everything but is a virtual slave to the vile Cesspool. Finally, there is the mysterious fur trader Klaxton (Jessie Howerton).

Cesspool is jealous of the Mountie's attention to young Nellie, and tries to frame the good-natured Mountie by slipping a stolen brooch into his pocket. Things get turned upside-down in a humorous way as things often do in melodramas.

Hot dogs, chips, sodas, and beer are sold at each performance. Opening night, January 24, is Dollar Beer Night. All beers are $1.

Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for students, and are available at lindsaycommunitytheater.com. For more information, call 284-2223.

The treacherous J Harrington Cesspool (Tim Gibson) is held at gunpoint by our hero, Mountie Dasheel (Jake Lomeli).

Next deadline:
Thursday, January 30, 2014

Budweiser EVENT CALENDAR

MUSIC

January

Jan. 18 – TCSO Locals Night – 7:30pm
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's very own musicians take their turns as resident artists in front of the orchestra at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 308 W. Main St., Visalia. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Jan. 18 – Celtic Rock with Tempest – 7:30pm
The Lindsay Community Theater will present Celtic Rock, a renowned hybrid of high-energy Folk Rock fusing Irish reels, Scottish ballads, Norwegian influences and other world music elements. For tickets, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.primetix.com.

Jan. 21 – Cody Torres – 7-10pm
On Tuesdays, singer and musician Cody Torres performs at Crawdaddys Visalia playing classic Country and Rock hits. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Jan. 21 – Salsa Tuesdays – 7pm
Salsa Night every Tuesday at The Cellar Door, 101 W. Main Street, Visalia. Advanced dance lessons start at 7pm. Beginner dance lessons start at 8pm. Music and dancing follows. $5 cover, 21+. Partner not required. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

Jan. 22 – David Laswell and the Rounders – 7-10pm
On Wednesdays, its KJUG Country Music night and David Laswell and the Rounders at Crawdaddys Visalia, 333 E Main Street. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Jan. 23 – The Worlds Ultimate Elvis – 7pm
Justin Shandor, an Elvis Tribute Show, will be held at Tachi Palace. For information, visit tachipalace.com

Jan. 23 – Styx – 7:30pm
Styx will perform at the Visalia Fox Theater. Tickets, $36-86, are available at foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 29 – Tommy Emmanuel – 7:30pm
Solo guitarist Tommy Emmanuel will perform at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets, $35-$125, are available at foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 24-26, 31 & Feb. 1,3, 7-9 – Respect, A Musical
Visalia Community Players will present "Respect, A Musical." For information visit visaliaplayers.org.

Jan. 25 – Cup of Jazz – 10am-12pm
Every Saturday enjoy some jazz with your coffee or tea at Cafe 210 in downtown Visalia.

Jan. 29 – Tommy Emmanuel – 7:30pm
Solo guitarist Tommy Emmanuel will perform at the Visalia Fox Theater. Tickets, $35-$125, are available at foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 29 – Britain's Finest (The Ultimate Beatles Tribute!) – 7:30pm
The popular tribute band, Britain's Finest (The Ultimate Tribute to The Beatles), will perform at The Cellar Door, 101 W. Main St., Visalia. Tickets for the 21+ event are $10.

Jan. 31 – Run4Cover – 9pm
Run4Cover will perform at the Cellar Door, Visalia. Cover price for this 21 and over concert is $6. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

February

Feb. 2 – Duo W – 3pm
Violin and Cello Duo W take a fresh and engaging approach to classical music at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information and tickets, visit threeriversperformingarts.org.

Feb. 8 – Tulare County Symphony – 7:30pm
TCSO musicians take their turn as resident artists in front of the orchestra at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets from $30 to $39.50. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

Feb. 8 – American Brilliance – 7:30pm
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra celebrates the Bull Moose president Teddy Roosevelt with special guest Clay Jenkinson portraying and narrating the tough as nails president in composer Chris Brubeck's musical biography and tribute. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Feb. 8 – Wes Hardin Band – 8-10pm
Wes Hardin Band will host a CD release party at the Cellar Door in downtown Visalia. Cover is $5 for this 21+ concert. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

Feb. 14 – Back to Black: A Tribute to Amy Winehouse
The Amy Winehouse tribute band, Back to Black, will have a special Valentine's Day Concert at the Cellar Door, 101 W. Main St. Visalia. $10 (21+). For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

Feb. 15 – Hannah and Talbot – 7pm
Mavericks Coffee House presents a new duo of award-winning musicians, Hannah and Talbot. Lon Hannah of the Sons of San Joaquin and Terry Talbot of the Mason Proffit Band have released a new album and will perform at Mavericks. For tickets, $25, call 624-1400 or visit Mavericks, 238 E. Caldwell, Visalia.

Feb. 20 – Air Supply – 7:30pm
Air Supply will perform in concert at Tachi Palace. Bingo Hall doors open at 6pm for the 7:30pm show. Tickets: $30, $50 and $70. Visit tachipalace.com for information.

Feb. 22 – A Tribute to Legendary Ladies of Country Music – 7:30pm
The Lindsay Community Theater will present A Tribute to Legendary Ladies of Country Music, featuring Sonya Diane Jones. For tickets, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.primetix.

EVENTS

January

Jan. 16-30 – Flu Shot Clinics
In response to the current flu situation, the Public Health Services Department of Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency has offered additional clinics (walk-ins and by appointment) to the public (targeting the uninsured and under-insured) from Monday- Friday during the month of January. For information call 685-5725.

Jan. 16 – The Executive Toolkit – 9-10am
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will launch a monthly seminar series, Visalia Business Academy on Jan. 16 with The Executive Toolkit, a technology-based seminar presented by Tim Torian of the Torian Group. The seminars will be held on the third Thursday each month at Brandman University's Visalia Campus, 649 S. County Center Dr. Reservations, required, may be made by calling 734-5876. Tickets are $15 for members, $30 for non-members or $250 for an annual pass.

Jan. 17 – Beginning Computers, part 2 –8:30am
The Tulare Public Library will hold a computer class. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 17 – Hanford Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Luncheon – 12-1pm
Kings County Department of Public Health will speak on Proposition 99, also known as the California Tobacco Health Protection Act. Tickets are $10. For information call the Hanford Chamber at 582-0483.

Jan. 18-19 – Tule Gem And Mineral Society Gemboree – 10am
The 58th Annual Exeter Gemboree, will host leading experts and industry professionals related to jewelry, gem and minerals, at Exeter Veterans Memorial Building, 324 N. Kaweah Ave. The event begins at 10am both days and closes at 5pm Saturday and 4pm on Sunday.

Jan. 19 – A Bridal Odyssey – 11am-4pm
A Bridal Odyssey, Central Valley's longest running bridal show, will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information visit abridalodyssey.com.

Jan. 20 – Grangeville Rose Pruning Demonstration
UCCE Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners will hold a demonstration using IPM (Integrated Pest Management). For information, call 852-2735 on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30am.

Jan. 20 – Martin Luther King Day
Tulare County Library branches will honor Dr. King all month long. Participants can make handprints on which to write kind words. The shapes will be joined in a banner in Dr. King's memory. The branch with the longest banner will receive a prize to share with its patrons. For information, visit tularecountylibrary.org.

Jan. 21-22 – Mentor Training – 6:30-8:30pm
The BEN-E-LECT Foundation will kickoff its year with its first free mentor training session, a two-part training that is part of BEN-E-LECT's On Purpose Project. Mentors are partnered with same-sex mentees who are attempting to get their lives on track by participating in programs offered by the foundation's partner organizations. To sign up or learn more about the On Purpose Project call 302-2388.

Jan. 22 – New Sagecrest Estates Visalia Models – 11:30am
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will hold a ribbon cutting for the New Sagecrest Estates Visalia Models, 3511 W. Oakridge Ave. For information, visit VisaliaChamber.org.

Jan. 22 – 2014 Sexual Harassment Prevention Training – 7:30-10am
Visalia Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with Pacific Employers, will present the state mandated Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (SHPT) Seminar & Workshop with full breakfast at the Lamp Liter Inn in Visalia. California Assembly Bill 1825 (AB 1825) requires California employers with 50 or more employees to provide all personnel who have "Supervisory Authority" a minimum of two hours of Sexual Harassment Prevention Training every two years. The seminar will be offered on four days: Jan. 22, April 23, July 23 and October 22. Cost is $35 for Pacific Employers and Chamber members. Call the Visalia Chamber at 734-5876 for reservations.

Jan. 23 – Chili's Give Back– 11am-11pm
Chili's Restaurant at 4015 S. Mooney Blvd, Visalia, will host a "give back" fundraising event to support the Valley Oak SPCA. With each flyer presented, Chili's will donate 15% of sales. For the flyer visit facebook.com/ValleyOakSPCA.

Jan. 23 – Artistic Synthetic Design by Sal – 4-4:30pm
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host a ribbon cutting for Artistic Synthetic Design by Sal at 6726 W. Pershing Ave. For information visit visaliachamber.org.

Jan. 24-27 – Life: Team West Meeting
Team's Training System will hold a leadership training meeting: "Life, Have Fun, Make Money, Make a Difference," at the Visalia Convention Center.

Jan. 24 – King's Fair Fundraiser – 3-6:30pm
In an effort to keep the community fair alive a fundraiser will be held at the Hanford Fraternal Pavilion. Drive through to receive a Pan of Portuguese Sopas, serves 6-8, for $40. Pre-sale tickets are available at the Fair Office. For information call 816-6909.

Jan. 24 – COS Giants Baseball Banquet
Meet the Giants Dinner/Dance and Silent Auction, a fundraiser for the College of Sequoia's Baseball Team, will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visit baseball.cos.edu.

Jan. 24 – Lemoore Chamber 56th Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Banquet – 6pm
The Lemoore Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual membership meeting and awards banquet. No-host socializing begins at 6pm, dinner by West Hills Culinary Department begins at 8pm and the program begins at 8:30. Don Warkentin will be honored as 2014 Citizen of The Year; Stoney's Sand and Gravel as Business of the Year; and Lemoore Volunteer Fire Department will be honored as 2014 Organization of the year. For tickets and information contact the Lemoore Chamber of Commerce at 924-6401.

Jan. 25 – Visalia Farmers Market – 8am-11:30 a.m.
Produce, prepared foods and entertainment are featured every Saturday, rain or shine, at the Sear's parking lot on Mooney Ave. Visit VisaliaFarmersMarket.com for information.

Jan. 25 – Springville Farmers Market – 9am-12pm
On the third Saturday of every month, Springville Farmers Market features a flea market. The market is open every Saturday at Springville Ranch, 36400 Hwy 190. For information contact Debbie Stengle at 359-0713.

Jan. 25 – Chumash Stories – 1pm
The Tulare Public Library will host a special presentation of Chumash Stories told by Alan 'Spirit Hawk' Salazar. He grew up in the Hanford-Tulare area, and will be sharing some of his experiences and Native American history in this educational presentation. All ages are welcome.

Jan. 25 – Lindsay Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet – 6pm
The Lindsay Chamber Awards Banquet will honor individuals, businesses and organizations that have made a contribution to the community. The dinner will be held at McDermont Field House and Sports Center. For nomination forms and sponsorship information, visit thelindsaychamber.com.

KIDS

Jan. 19 – YU-GI-OH – 5-7pm
Young adults, ages 10-19, will compete in a YU-GI-OH tournament. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 25 – Academic Decathlon - 8:30am-3pm
Academic Decathlon is a countywide student event for grades nine through twelve. It is part of the National Academic Decathlon competition. Schools field teams of up to nine members divided by thirds into Honors, Scholastic, and Varsity. Students compete in a series of ten academic events including written examinations, speech, interview and Super Quiz. The winner in Tulare County competes at the state level; the state winner competes at the national level. The interview, speech and essays will be held at Porterville College. Testing, Super Quiz Relay and Awards will be held Feb. 1, 8:30am-5pm, at Mission Oak High School, Tulare. For information, contact Laura Voshall at laurav@ers.tcoe.org or call 651-3044.

Jan. 25-26 – Camp Zap
Former Police Chief John Zapalac will host a camp at his ranch in the foothills of Lemon Cove for a weekend of camping, horseback riding, hiking, games and crafts. Youth of all ages may attend. Volunteers from the Woodlake Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, Family Healthcare Network, YMCA, Americorp, Woodlake Fire and others get together 4 times a year for Camp Zap. The Tulare County Board of Supervisors provides bus service. For information, contact Minerva Zapalac at 799-2586 or visit campzap.org.

Jan. 25 – Kid's Activities-Chumash Stories– 1-2 pm
Kids' activities take place every Saturday in the Olympic Room of the Tulare Public Library. A special event will be Chumash stories told by Alan 'Spirit Hawk' Salazar on the 25th.

Jan. 28 & 30 – Mock Trial – 5-8pm
High school students throughout Tulare County compete as lawyers, plaintiffs, and defendants to gain experience in public speaking and the law. Local lawyers serve as judges and advisors. Events will be held Jan. 28 & 30; Feb. 4, 6, & 13 at the Tulare County Courthouse and on Feb. 20 at the El Diamante High School Theater, Visalia. For information visit tcoe.org.

Jan. 28 – Teen Game Night – 5pm
Teen Game Night for ages 13 to 19 is held on the Last Tuesday of each month in the Tulare Public Library Charter Room.

Jan. 29 – SCICON Open House – 12-4pm
Tulare County Office of Education will host an open house for students and families to visit the campus, located seven miles northeast of Springville. The campus offers sixth graders cabins, nature hikes, a museum of natural history, a planetarium, a raptor center and educational activities. For information, contact Rick Mitchell at rickmit@tcoe.org or call 539-2642.

COMMUNITY

January

Jan. 17 – Tulare County Library Toastmasters –12-1pm
Toastmasters holds its weekly meeting at the Visalia Branch Library in the Purple Room. For information visit tularecountylibrary.org.

Jan. 20 – CPAP Maintenance – 5:30-7pm
A.W.A.K.E., a Kaweah Delta support group, will host a talk on CPAP maintenance. The group meets quarterly in the Acequia Wing at 400 W. Mineral King Ave., Visalia. For information, visit KaweahDelta.org.

Jan. 21-May 14 - Exercise for the Community
A Porterville College Community Education course, Exercise for the Community, will be held Tuesdays from 7-8am and 8-9am in Rm. FIT 751 in the Fitness Center. Cost is $80. Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For more information, call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Jan. 21 – League of Women Voters Meeting – 11:45am
The League of Women Voters will meet in the Club House, 699 W. Center. The public is invited to attend. A fixed price lunch for $13, including tax and tip, will be served. Kim Loeb, natural resource conservation manager for the City of Visalia, will be the speaker.

Jan. 22 – The Knitting Club – 5:30pm
Every other Wednesday, the Knitting Club meets in the Olympic Room of the Tulare Public Library. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 23 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Jan. 23 – Hospital 411 – 7-8:30pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will host a forum: Hospital 411: Where Your Voice Joins the Conversation at the Visalia Marriott, 300 S. Court Street. For information, call 624-2463.

Jan. 25 – Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening - 8am-12pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will host a free screening for abdominal aortic aneurysms at Kaweah Delta Imaging Center, 4949 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia. Men and women who are 60 years or older and have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, emphysema or obesity should be screened along with men and women 50 years and older with a family history of the condition. To get a free screening advance registration is required by calling 625-9503.

Jan. 25 – Sci/Fi Book Club – 1pm
The Tulare Public Library Sci/Fi Book Club will discuss Interworld by Neil Gaiman and Michael Reaves. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 28 – Tuesdays with Ernie – 10am
Newly diagnosed patients and their loved ones are invited to attend this support group at the Sequoia Regional Cancer Center every Tuesday. For information, call 624-3225.

Jan. 30 – Last Thursday Book Club – 6 p.m.
The Tulare Public Library Last Thursday book Club will discuss The Island of Lost Maps by Miles Harvey. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

February

Feb. 3 – Grief Support Group – 6:30-8pm
Kaweah Delta Hospice will hold its Grief Support Group at 900 W. Oak Ave. The group meets on the first and third Mondays each month. For information, call 733-0642.

Feb. 4-May 8 – Community Ceramics – 3:30-5:30pm
Community Ceramics at Porterville College includes the techniques in hand-building, slab-building and wheel-throwing. Class runs through the May 8 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Cost: $60. Supplies not included (bring bag of clay to class). Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For information on Community Education Classes call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Feb. 4 – First Tuesday Book Club – 6:30-7:45pm
The First Tuesday Book Club of the Visalia Branch Library will discuss "Ireland" by Frank Delaney. For information, visit tularecountylibrary.org.

Feb. 6 – Prostate Cancer Support Group – 3:30pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District hosts this support group on the first Thursday each month at the Sequoia Regional Cancer Center. For information, call 624-3225.

Feb. 6 – Tulare Kings Mensa – 5:30pm
Tulare Kings Mensa, the high IQ society in the South Valley, will meet at Panera Bread, 4103 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, at 5:30pm, for coffee, bagels, sandwiches and conversation. Prospective members encouraged to attend. For information, call 280-9774.

Feb. 6 – Cancer is Dinner Talk – 5:30pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District hosts this support group on the first Thursday each month at the Sequoia Regional Cancer Center. For information, call 624-3225.

Feb. 6 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Feb. 7 – Central Valley Parkinson's Support Group – 10:30am–12pm
The Central Valley Parkinson's Support Group will meet at 5200 W. Caldwell Ave., Visalia (United Methodist Church). For information, visit cvpsg.org.

Feb. 10 – Loss of Spouse Support Group – 10:30am-12pm
The Loss of Spouse Support Group meets on the second and fourth Monday each month at Quail Park, 4520 W. Cypress Ave. For information, call 733-0642.

Feb. 12 – Mended Hearts Support Group – 6:30pm
The Mended Hearts Support Group meets on the second Wednesday each month at the Sequoia Regional Cancer Center. For information, visit KaweahDelta.org.

Feb. 15 – Lemoore Kiwanis Valentine Dinner
The Lemoore Kiwanis will hold its Valentine Dinner. For information, 924-8811.

"How the World was Created from a Drop of Milk" by Barbara Van Arnam, viewable at the Kings Art Center in Hanford.

"Hoochie Momma Eats Sushi" by Deolinda Rhoads

Kings Art Center Exhibitions Celebrate Fabric and Myth

Two exhibitions will open at The Kings Art Center in Hanford on February 1: "Fiber – Fabric – Thread" in the Marcellus Gallery, and "Mystic Man: Nordic and African Stories" in the Members Gallery.

"Fiber – Fabric – Thread" presents new work by members of the Common Threads Quilt Guild. This group of award-winning artists is as diverse as the material they use to create both traditional and innovative works in fabric.

"Mystic Man: Nordic and African Stories" features Barbara Van Arnam's paintings and figures, which focus on the theme of myth and the ancient legacy of oral storytelling.

An opening reception, which includes a walk-through with the exhibiting artists, will be held Friday, January 31, from 5:30-7:30pm. The exhibitions run through March 22.

Gallery hours are 11m-4pm Wednesday through Friday, and noon-3pm Saturday and Sunday. Admission is free and tours are by appointment. For more information, call 584-1065.

ART

January

Through Feb. 22 – Tulare County Varied Impressions
The Tulare Historical Museum presents Tulare County Varied Impressions featuring local artists and local scenes. For information, tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Through March 1 – Favorite Places Exhibit – 5-7pm
Michael's Jewelry on Main hosts an art exhibit by Jeri Burzin, photographer and Toni Best, gourd artist. The exhibit features Burzin's images from Yosemite and the Southwest and Best's beautiful, unique gourds. For information, call 967-8635, or visit maingalleryvisalia.com

Through March 15 – Miniatures Exhibit
Miniature works of art donated by local artists will be on display at the Tulare Historical museum through March 15. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Jan. 22 – Urban Art Exhibit
Three pieces of urban art, inspired by Pro Youth HEART will be showcased at 11 Tulare County Locations from Jan. 22 through April 2. The art is on display at the Tulare County's Visalia Branch Library, 200 W. Oak St., through Jan. 22. Then it will be moved to the Dinuba Branch Library Jan. 22-29. Other stops include libraries in Woodlake, Exeter, Lindsay, Strathmore, Porterville, Erlimart, Pixley and Tulare. The last showing will be at Tulare County Government Plaza, 5961 S. Mooney Blvd in Visalia, from March 26 through April 2. For more information, visit stepuptc.com.

Jan. 24-Feb. 9 – Betty Berk Art Exhibit
Betty Berk will be showing her latest painting series at the Ice House Theater from Jan. 24 through Feb. 9. There will be an artist reception Jan. 24. You can also view Berk's artwork at her gallery space at Sorenson's Studio in Fresno or one of her exhibits in the area throughout the year. To learn more, visit her website at bettyberk.com.

February

Feb. 1 – First Saturday in Three Rivers – 11am-5pm
First Saturday in Three Rivers will feature open art studios and art vendors. For information, visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

Feb 4-May 8 - Community Ceramics - 3:30-5:30pm
A Porterville College Community Education Course, Community Ceramics, includes the techniques in hand-building, slab-building and wheel throwing. Class starts Feb. 4 and runs through May 8 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 -5:30pm. Cost: $60. Supplies not included (bring bag of clay to class). Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For more information on Community Education Classes call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Feb. 5-28 – Sofa Art Reads a Good Book
The opening reception for the Sofa Art Exhibit will be held Feb. 7 from 6- 8pm at Arts Visalia Visual Art Center. The entries will be on display through Feb. 28. For information, visit artsvisalia.org.

Feb. 7 – Porterville Art Walk – 5-8pm
Porterville Art Walk, held on the First Friday of every month, is a self-guided tour of local art galleries, art studios, museums and alternative art venues. For information, theportervilleartwalk.org.

Feb. 7 - Sofa Art Show Reception – 6-8pm
Arts Visalia will hold a reception for its Annual Sofa Art Show that runs from Feb. 5-28. For information, artsvisalia.org.

Feb. 27-March 29 – Annual Student Art Show
The Tulare Historical Museum presents its Annual Student Art Show. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

March

March 1 – First Saturday in Three Rivers – 11am-5pm
First Saturday in Three Rivers will feature open art studios and art vendors. For information, visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

April 5 – First Saturday in Three Rivers – 11am-5pm
First Saturday in Three Rivers will feature open art studios and art vendors. For information, visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

April – Lindsay Orange Blossom Festival

THEATER

Jan. 16 – Independent Film Series: Broken – 6-7:45pm
The Tulare County Public Library Independent Film Series will view the movie "Broken," directed by Rufus Norris. The summer holidays have just begun and 11-year-old Skink's afternoons are full of daydreams. Films are shown monthly in the Visalia Branch, Blue Room. For information visit tularecountylibrary.org.

Jan. 18 – Annual Murder Mystery Dinner – 6:30pm
Encore Theatre Company will present "A Fatal Fairy Tale" for its annual Murder Mystery Dinner Fundraiser. Tickets are $45. For reservations call 686-1300.

Jan. 24-25 – Respect
"Respect," a high-energy review of women in music from the early 1900s to the present, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre, located at the corner of Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on Jan. 24-25 and a matinee will be at 2pm on Jan. 26. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Jan. 30 – Amreeka – 7:30pm
Stella Artois Independent Film Series and The Fox Theatre will present "Amreeka," a drama centered on the trials and tribulations of a proud Palestinian Christian immigrant single mother and her teenage son in a small town in Indiana. Tickets from $5 to $7. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 30-31 – A Midsummer Night's Dream – 7:30pm
College of the Sequoias' Theatre Department will remount two performances of its hit adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream to raise money for the production's inclusion in the prestigious Kennedy Center's American College Theater Festival in February. Cost is $20 general admission and $10 students. A special VIP pre-show on Jan. 31 for $100 will include VIP room with heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine and entertainment, VIP seating for the production, VIP room with deserts and drinks during intermission.

Jan. 31 and Feb. 1-2 – Respect
"Respect," a high-energy review of women in music from the early 1900s to the present, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre, located at the corner of Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 and a matinee will be at 2pm on Feb. 2. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Feb. 6-9, 14-16 and 20-22 – The Drowsy Chaperone
Encore Theatre Company presents "The Drowsy Chaperone" at the Encore Theatre, 324 South N Street, Tulare. Advance tickets available. For more information, visit www.tulareencoretheatre.org.

February

Feb. 7-9 – Respect
"Respect," a high-energy review of women in music from the early 1900s to the present, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre, located at the corner of Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on Feb. 7-8 and a matinee will be at 2pm on Feb. 9. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Feb. 7-9, 14-16 & 21-22 – Sleeping Beauty
The Enchanted Playhouse presents "Sleeping Beauty." For information, visit enchantedplayhouse.org.

Feb. 16 – Brian Regan – 7:30pm
Comedian Brian Regan will perform at the Visalia Fox Theater. Tickets, $25-$47, are available at foxvisalia.org.

Feb. 20, 21, 22 – Little Women – 7pm
The Redwood High School Drama Department will present its theatrical production of the Tony Award-winning musical "Little Women" at the L.J. Williams Theater in Visalia. Tickets are $12.

See more events online

ourvalleyvoice.com

In 'The Monuments Men,' Edsel Makes the Historical Timeless

HANNAH GREEN

In the same way Adolf Hitler sought to control the world population during World War II, he sought to possess the art world as well: by controlling the availability and even existence of certain pieces, he likely hoped to control inspiration and minds. Fighting the Nazis in this endeavor was a small band of international men and women who were known as the Monuments Men. These soldiers and civilians raced across battle lines, hacked through bureaucratic red tape, and even sacrificed their lives to rescue critical works of art and significant architecture from the Nazi's insatiable greed. Robert M. Edsel seeks to reveal their movements and motives in his historical novel, *The Monuments Men*.

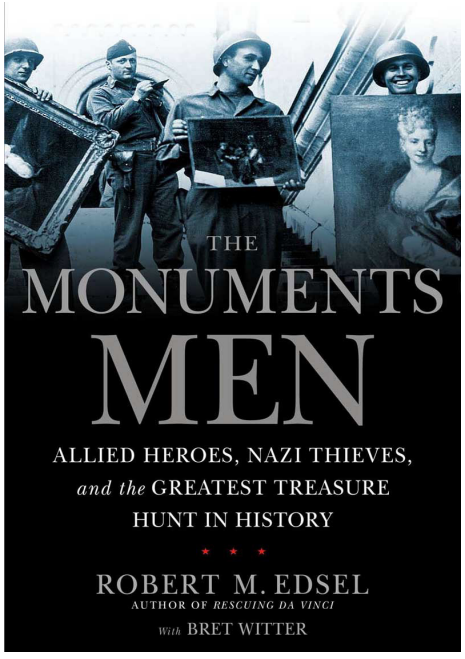
Although a degree in art history might enhance the reading of this novel—I wouldn't know—Edsel does not require his readers to be familiar with titles of even great works. He provides enough background information for novice art supporters to understand the pieces of art while not so much information as to bore a more advanced audience. Edsel is also adept enough at writing awe and gravitas that his contexts promote the appropriate emotional and intellectual reactions in the readers as well as appreciation; thus, *Monuments Men* is a novel that is accessible for all levels of art appreciation.

It helps that Edsel is more a writer of stories than a writer of events. His work breathes when he recounts an anecdote, pieces together a personal history, or brings us into a character's head, but when describing dates and military movements, his sentences can be clunky or gummy. Luckily, the novel centers on the stories and people at which he excels. In these moments, the writing is tinged with humor and suspense, both of which require precise timing and preparation. He makes good use of pauses to imbue tension and spontaneous conversations to inject levity into a weighty topic. His best moments of humor are funny enough that they could belong in a fiction novel, not an historical account—one of his best lines comes from the clumsy merging of the French and British armies: "The food was British and the toilets French, when it should have been the other way around." These bits are almost too witty for their grim situations, just as humorous moments can be in real life. However, Edsel sticks to the facts even in these instances, using his extensive primary research to guide the text all along. The extent of his research is obvious in Edsel's descriptions of historical excerpts both grand—the peace of a cathedral, the vast importance of the Louvre—and the mundane, even dirty moments of military life. In one grossly amusing section, Edsel tells of an instance in which German soldiers used important historical papers as toilet paper—and a French caretaker found the papers, cleaned them, and returned them to the French library.

Edsel uses his wit and precision to help us keep track of his large cast of characters. For most of his central characters, he provides us with pithy, synecdochic descriptions: the bulldog, the dapper one, and so on. This is especially important given the layout of the novel; each chapter centers around one character's doings or one artwork's locale. This makes *Monuments* read almost like a collection of short stories with recurring characters—the chapters would almost be fine as small, stand-alone stories (once the reader had the necessary background information), especially in his better-written chapters where character development, suspense, and occasional resolution are available, but it also serves the greater purpose of the novel: the importance of art. He discusses this importance by sharing with the readers the views of the Monuments Men, and the ways in which art is important in and of itself and also important to humankind; perhaps, one Monuments Man muses, man's outlook on art is more important than some of the art itself.

Edsel's writing, though generally skillful, can skew toward bias at points. Edsel uses the appropriate preservation of art as a sort of litmus test; the "good guys" appear to always have art and its continued healthy existence in their hearts; the "bad guys" use art for personal glory, amassing wealth, and have no qualms—or at least no overriding qualms—about destroying it when it's convenient to do so or to prevent others from possessing it, presumably in part because they believe their enemies would use it for their own glory and wealth, even as Edsel shows us that the latter fear is unfounded. It's a simple litmus, if one that doesn't hold entirely true at the beginning of the novel: American soldiers did blow up a strategic cathedral when the Germans respected it and left it untouched, but here Edsel shares pages of motive for the Americans. He lends no such reasoning or empathy to the Germans and Nazis when the tables are turned. This is an understandable bias—one that readers likely all share—but were Edsel able to find room in the novel, a more balanced research and inclusion of enemy motives when destroying art could have made for a richer, more haunting novel.

Of course, the obvious question is why—why another novel about Nazis? Why a novel recounting one of the best-documented historical events? Why do stories of WWII still fascinate us? Is it because of the temerity of the human spirit and the horrors of human actions? Is it because we still experience racism



and also fear those who are different, or because stories from the war are so numerous they could never fully be told? What can we still learn from the stories of WWII—what is Edsel teaching us that is new, fresh, or bears repeating? The reason that this novel captures our attentions—Edsel is a bestselling author, and *Monuments* is set to be released as a movie on February 7—is that the themes of this novel are universal, and these universal themes are always, always worth remembering. Edsel writes of a Nazi WWII story because the preservation of culture, bettering of humankind, and reminder of the best of who we are and what we should strive to be worth is always, always a worthwhile story.

The Monuments Men is indeed a novel about the momentous. Honor and duty, and the singular actions and habits of individual people in accord with their honor and duty, are what Edsel strives to preserve in this historical tale. This is what great works of art themselves seek to sustain: as Edsel quotes President Franklin D. Roosevelt, art preserves the "symbols of the human spirit and…the world the freedom of the human spirit made." The nature of *The Monuments Men*, though historical, is timeless.

Ice House Theater Hosts Betty Berk Art Exhibition

Betty Berk, whose artwork features beautiful color combinations and expressive brushwork, will show her latest painting series at the Ice House Theater in Visalia from January 24 through February 9. There will be an artist reception on Friday, January 24.

"Path into the Valley" by Betty Berk

Berk, who teaches art at Dinuba High School, is exhibits director for the Alliance of California Artists. Her artwork has been shown from Oakhurst though Tulare and has won awards from Yosemite Western Artists and Alliance of California Artists.

"Creating artworks has been an integral part of my life since childhood," said Berk. "I studied art at the various colleges I went to and eventually became a high school art teacher. Through years of study, mentorship with Abby Rubenstein and Jerome Grimmer, and workshops with known artists, such as Carolyn Anderson and Betty Carr, I have become an expressionist painter."

She also credits her piano teacher, John Kitterman of Hamilton Piano Studio, for helping her reach a greater depth of expression in her paintings.

"As an expressionist painter I use color freely to express my feelings about the subject of my artwork," she said. "Very often the subject is symbolic of my own inner experience. I use vigorous brushwork to convey a unifying surface that symbolizes my own vision of the network and connections I am aware of in the world around me."

Her work will also be exhibited at Michael's Jewelry in Downtown Visalia in May-June, Suncrest Bank in Visalia in September-October, and at Su Sa's Club House in Visalia in November-December.

For more information about the artist, visit www.bettyberk.com.

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Movie

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almost everywhere you could imagine during the late spring and summer a couple of years ago, from the Woodlake Airport, a Portuguese radio station west of Visalia, to some of the roads less traveled through Valley orchards."

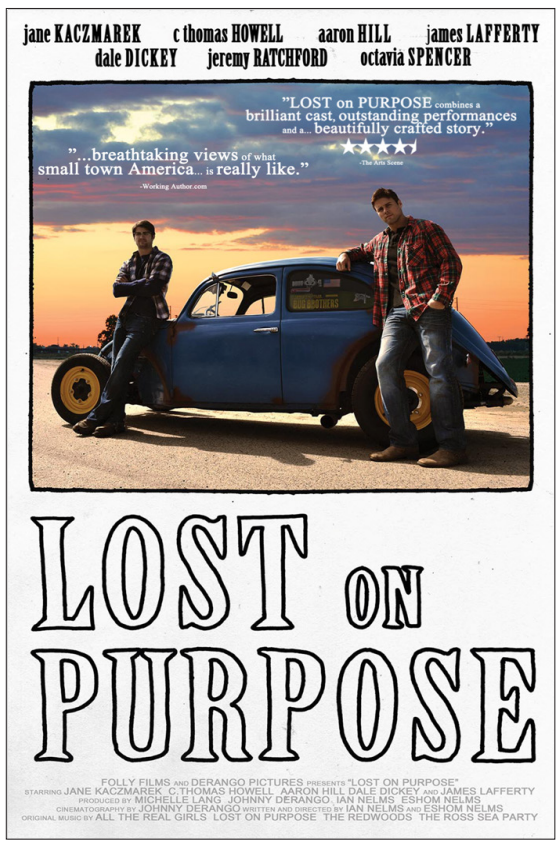
Ian and Eshom Nelms grew up in Woodlake and went to high school in Visalia before making their way to Southern California to seek work in the Hollywood film industry. Eshom, a talented artist, has built a career doing storyboard illustrations for many film projects such as "The Help" – while Ian has worked behind the camera in a variety of roles in film production.

Both Nelms brothers worked to pay their dues in the film industry, writing, directing and working in almost every creative aspect of film production on industry film productions and on their own projects, but they never forgot their Valley ties, frequently traveling home to see family and friends.

"The more we filmed in other areas down south or out on location, the more we kept thinking about all these great locations Tulare County had to offer," Ian Nelms said. "We wanted to get share that special scenic, rural beauty we grew up in with audiences everywhere. That's also why we set our story 'Lost on Purpose' here in the Valley.

"There is a majesty to our Valley that plays very well on the big screen – a idyllic world of agriculture, rolling rivers and orchards that many people have never experienced and that is fresh and new. This is a perfect canvas to illustrate a screenplay."

This event is made possible through TUGG Screenings and must have at least 214 seats pre-sold, seven days before the screening date, in order for the event to take place - so tickets need to be purchased before February 13.



Coyne said the Nelms brothers relied on their Valley connections to arrange to shoot on a small dairy, at roping arenas and dozens of other locations. The film commission also reached out to local city leaders and businesses, which also embraced the filmmakers' creative vision and allowed photography in many situations that otherwise would have been very challenging.

"It's not easy to talk city hall into allowing you to stage a high speed street race in downtown Visalia - or a brawl on Main Street right across from the Fox Theater while a concert is going on – all on short notice," Coyne said. "But the City of Visalia was wonderful to work with, and the Nelms brothers had a good safety plan, so we had no problems at all – even when they wanted to stage a wild party scene that started inside the Pump House bar and spilled outside into a gang confrontation."

Tulare County residents may also recognize many local faces on the big screen when Lost on Purpose premieres, including Tulare City Councilman David Macedo, who played a key role in the film.

"It's funny, we didn't know he was a councilman until later – we were searching for an experienced auctioneer and one name kept coming up – at least he didn't have to travel for this role!" Ian Nelms said.

Another break came when Ian and Eshom were looking for a hospital facility willing to allow filming to occur – Tulare Regional Medical Center leaders stepped up and allowed an army of cast and crew to invade for a crucial day of filming – the only day Academy Award-winning actress Spencer was available to shoot her part.

"We were honored to have Octavia come aboard for her role," Ian Nelms said. "Her scenes were filmed just before she was nominated for her role in "The Help" and she was in high demand."

Tickets are available at www.tugg.com/events/7451.

Styx

Continued from p. 17

"Cornerstone"), and spawned such hit singles and classic rock radio standards as "Come Sail Away," "Renegade," "Blue Collar Man" and "Fooling Yourself."

The band decided that their first release of the '80s would be a concept album, 1981's "Paradise Theater," which was loosely based on the rise and fall of a once-beautiful theater. "Paradise Theater" became Styx's biggest hit of their career (selling over three million copies), as they became one of the U.S. top rock acts due to such big hit singles as "Too Much Time on My Hands." It also marked the first time a band released four consecutive triple-platinum albums.

A career-encompassing live album, "Caught in the Act," was issued in 1984, before Styx went on hiatus, and the majority of its members pursued solo projects throughout the remainder of the decade. A re-recording of their early hit, "Lady" (titled "Lady '95"), for a greatest hits compilation, finally united Shaw with his former Styx bandmates, which led to a full-on reunion tour in 1996. But drummer John Panozzo fell seriously ill at the time (due to a long struggle with alcoholism), which prevented him from joining the proceedings -- as he passed away in July of the same year. Styx persevered with new drummer Sucherman, as the Styx reunion tour became a surprise sold-out success, resulting in the release of a live album/video, 1997's "Return to Paradise," while a whole new generation of rock fans were introduced to the grandiose sounds of Styx via a humorous car ad which used the track "Mr. Roboto," as well as songs used in such TV shows as "South Park" and "Freaks & Geeks."

Tickets for the 7:30pm show are $36-86, and are available at foxvisalia.org.

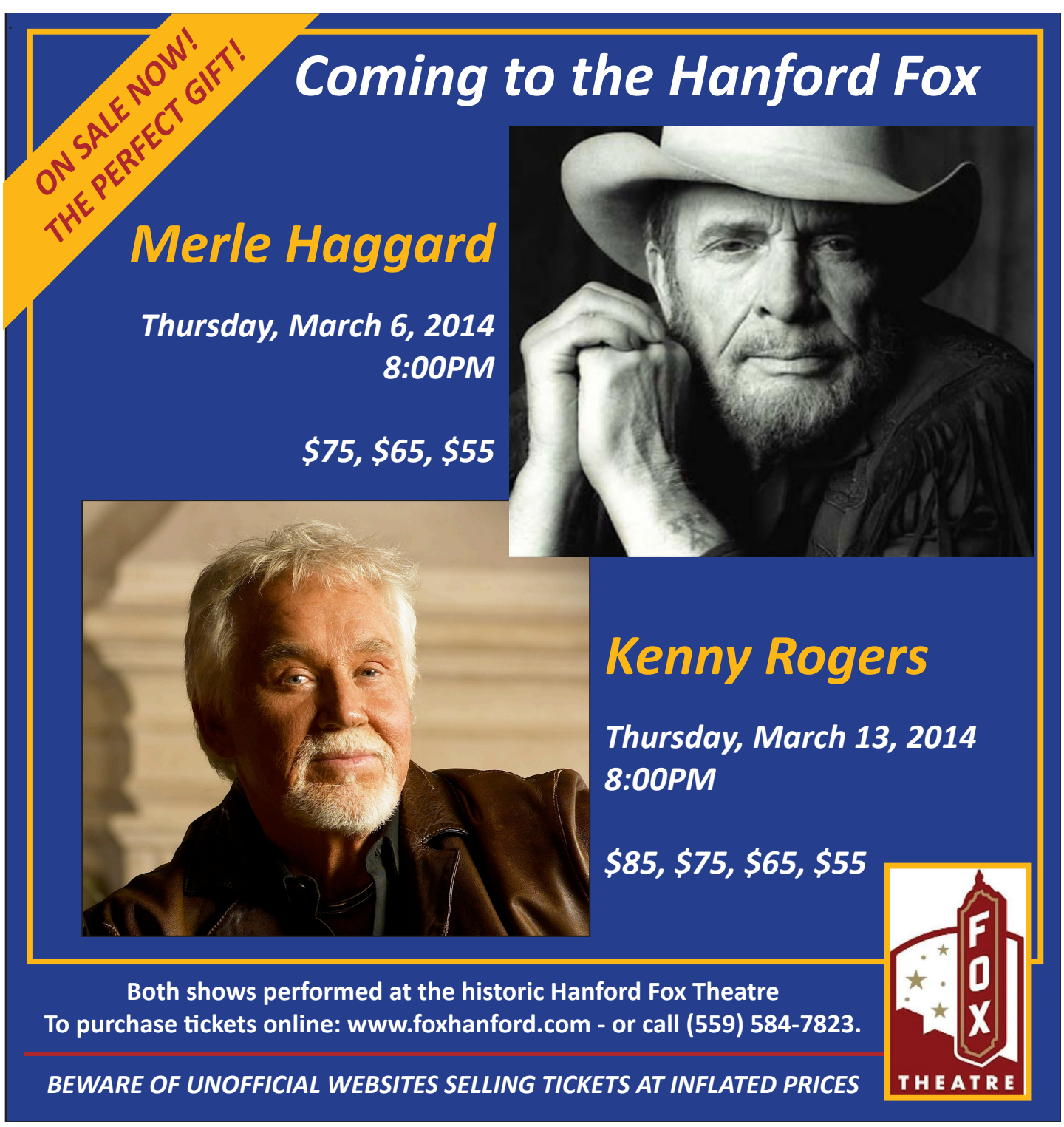
Emmanuel

Continued from p. 17

Acoustic Guitar Magazine named him Best Acoustic Guitarist and Gold Medalist in the in the Readers' Choice and Players' Choice Awards. *Guitar Player's* 2010 Readers Choice awards named him Best Acoustic Guitarist for the second time.

In all, Emmanuel's catalogue includes over 20 musical recordings of solos, duets, ensembles, cover tunes and originals, utilizing both electric and acoustic guitar. He has made six live performance DVDs, six additional instructional DVDs and CDs, and regularly teaches master classes while on the road.

Emmanuel's latest album is the self-released and highly anticipated live CD/DVD combo, "Tommy Emmanuel: Live and Solo in Pensacola, Florida." Recorded live in early 2013, this CD/DVD includes old and new favorites, exhibiting his amazing showmanship and musical talent as he performs before a packed house.

Performing live for his fans is extremely important to Emmanuel and he has demonstrated this by playing close to or over 300 concerts every year for the last seven years. Guitar players of all levels come to his shows to watch him work his magic, but his appeal goes far beyond musicians. His live shows are known for their humor, performance, passion and infectious joy.

Tickets are $35-$125, and available at foxvisalia.org.